A

JOURNAL OF MEDITATIONS

FOR

EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR,

COLLECTED FROM

The most Approved Authors:

CONTAINING

SOME HISTORICAL NARRATIONS AND PARABLES OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST; MEDITATIONS ON THE SAINTS; AND ON THE APPROPRIATE SUBJECTS OF EVERY SUNDAY IN THE YEAR,

IN REGULAR SUCCESSION.

THIRD EDITION.

DUBLIN:
JAMES DUFFY AND CO., LTD.,
15 WELLINGTON QUAY.
1895.

Nihil Obstat.

G. H. MURPHY, *S. T. D.*,

CENS. DEP.

Imprimatur.

✠ GULIELMUS,

ARCHIEPISCOPUS DUBLINENSIS,

HIBERNIÆ PRIMAS.

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The above are followed by Meditations on the appropriate subject of every Sunday in the year, in regular succession.

INTRODUCTION.

OF THE METHOD OF THE WORK, AND OF SUCH THINGS AS ARE NECESSARY FOR ALL MEDITATION.

Our chief intent in this Journal is to suggest certain brief heads, or points of Meditation, for the benefit of such as, being desirous to spend some short time daily in the exercise of Mental Prayer, have not leisure to peruse, nor convenience to have still about them, larger volumes.

We have assigned to every day in the year its peculiar Meditation; wherefore, if at any time there chance to be more Meditations than days that year, as for example before Advent or Christmas, or when there are weeks after Epiphany or Pentecost, those that are over and above are to be omitted that year.

As to the Method, we have, for the most part, followed the abridgment of F. Lewis's (of Puente) Meditations. Wherefore, we have taken our beginning from the purgative way, employing the month of November in the consideration of our end, of Sin, of Death, of Judgment, of Purgatory, and of Hell; yet so, that it be free for every one, either to assume these for this month, or to continue on according to the day and week after Pentecost, which he is in, till Advent. From Advent to Septuagesima Sunday (to conform ourselves to the use and practice of the Church), we treat of the Incarnation, Nativity, and Infancy of Christ, which appertain to the illuminative way. From Septuagesima to Easter, we contemplate the Passion; thence again, we treat of the several appearances of our Lord, of God's divine benefits, and of other mysteries proper to feasts, which occur at that time; all which appertain to the unitive way.

And, lastly, from the third Sunday after Pentecost, we proceed in the rest of our Saviour's Life and Preaching till November.

Upon every Sunday and Solemn Feast, that hath a determinate fixed place in this our distribution, we have endeavoured to comply with the general devotion towards the Blessed Sacrament, and, therefore, have instituted on those days a Meditation of Holy Communion, taking out of the Gospel of the day (excepting the Sundays of November, which, as such, have no certain gospel), some considerations, under which we may consider Christ in the Eucharist, much after the manner wherein Antonius Molina, Alvarez de Paez, and others, consider Him—now as a king, now as a guest, spouse, physician, etc.

To these meditations we have prefixed a congruous Reflection; that is, some versicle taken out of the Scripture, for every one to entertain his thoughts with, while he awaketh from sleep, and clotheth himself, that he may the better be disposed to entertain Him whom he is to receive that day.

Although our intended brevity will not admit of any long discourse, yet we cannot omit to say something briefly in this place concerning Meditation, for the necessary information of those who are less conversant in this exercise. If any desire further instruction in this point, they may receive full satisfaction by reading F. Lewis's Introduction to Mental Prayer, which is the entrance to his Book of Meditations.

OF MEDITATION.

MEDITATION is nothing else but an exercise of the interior powers of our soul, viz., memory, understanding, and will, whereby we consider God, and the mysteries of our faith, entertaining ourselves in affectionate discourses with His divine Majesty; begging of Him His gifts, and negotiating with Him the main affair of our

salvation and perfection. In Meditation there are four principal parts.

The first, is the exercise of our memory, whereby, after we have placed ourselves in the presence of God, we set before us the mystery whereon we intend to meditate, divided into points, exercising ourselves in lively acts of faith concerning the same mystery, without which all our meditations will be cold and languid, according to the saying of the prophet: "If you will not believe, you shall not understand."—Isa. vii. 9, Septuag.

The second, is the exercise of our understanding, which goeth through the matter proposed, bending its forces to penetrate and comprehend it, with all its causes, properties, effects, and circumstances; and framing thence such discourses and reasons as may convince us of the truths we meditate on, which being represented to the will, may move it to congruous affections.

The third, consisteth in the motion of the will, conformably to what the understanding had suggested unto it, so as to produce several acts and affections; some in order to one's-self, others in order to God, as of love, confidence, gratitude, sorrow, hatred, confusion, desire of our spiritual progress, etc., which are the proper effects and end of Meditation.

The fourth, consisteth in demanding of God such things as by Meditation we understand to be necessary for us, which we perform by presenting our request by some colloquy to the Blessed Trinity, either severally to one or more persons; or generally to all, as the present matter may require, or our affection suggest.

In every Meditation certain preambles are necessary, which help, and, as it were, open the way into the matter we are about to contemplate. We should have assigned proper preambles to each Meditation; but because that could not stand with our intended brevity, we have thought fit to set down in this place something of them in general.

OF PREAMBLES.

In every meditation, two preambles, at least, are necessary. The first is called Composition of Place, the second is the imploring of Divine Light, or Grace.

Composition of Place, is nothing but a certain imaginary representation of the persons, places, and other objects, on which we are to meditate, as if we had seen them with our eyes. For example, if your Meditation be on our Lord's Nativity, for the first Preamble, imagine yourself to see the cave, or stable, lying open to the winds; the crib, or manger, wherein the Blessed Infant lieth; the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph standing by, and the like. If your Meditation be on death, set before your eyes a sick man, lying on his death-bed, given over by the physicians, oppressed with grief and pain; if it be on Hell, imagine some frightful and hideous dungeon, dark, loathsome, emitting fiery flames, etc., and so of others.

But if your Meditation be not on any corporal thing, or subject to sense; as for example, on the Attributes of God, on the grievousness of sin and the like; and there occur no fitter or more proper Preamble for a general one in all such cases, imagine yourself before the throne of the Divine Majesty, as a poor beggar asking alms, to wit, that by His grace you may employ that half hour or hour in the contemplation of things conducing to your salvation.

The second Preamble is generally everywhere the same, to wit, the imploring of divine light and grace, that you may come to understand and love, as you ought, the good, and detest and avoid the evil which you are to meditate on, according to the diversity of the subject.

Entering, therefore, into Meditation, place yourself, first, with all humility, in the presence of God, imagining that Christ expects you there, ready to give you audience; then, kneeling down with profound rever-

ence, say that short preparatory prayer of the Church: "Prevent, we beseech thee, O Lord, our actions, by Thy holy inspiration, and carry them on by Thy gracious assistance, that every prayer and work of ours may begin always from Thee, and by Thee be happily ended; through Christ our Lord. Amen;" or some other like: then make use of the first Preamble of Composition of Place; and, that being done, beg of Almighty God grace, suitable to the subject of your present Meditation. After this, enter upon the points or matter of your Meditation, which must be prepared beforehand, and discourse upon them with your understanding, examining with yourself who, what, where, by what means, wherefore, in what manner, when, and other general circumstances that offer themselves; and in all of them endeavour, as often as there shall be occasion, to stir up your will by pious affections and colloquies, in which the chief fruit of prayer consists; therefore, we will treat of them in this place more at large.

OF COLLOQUIES.

COLLOQUIES are to be made as well through the whole course, as at the end of Meditation, viz., as often as the will is stirred up to love or hatred, to prosecute or fly what is set before it, according as it is informed by the understanding of the goodness or the malice of the object; and because we may divers ways conceive God in relation to ourselves, therefore the Colloquies are to be made, sometimes as of a subject to his prince, sometimes as of a child to his father; at other times again, as of the spouse to her beloved, of friend to friend, of a criminal to his judge, etc.; now begging something, now admiring, now offering, now congratulating, now condoling, as the present matter shall require. And because there are many kinds of these affections, it will not be amiss in this place to arrange some of them in particular in an alphabetical order.

The Colloquy, therefore, may be framed by way of:—

1.—ACCUSATION. Accusing yourself for having been the cause, for example, of Christ's sufferings, or of other evils, saying with David, "Am not I he that commanded? It is I that have sinned: it is I that have done the evil, etc. O Lord my God, let Thy hand be turned, I beseech Thee, upon me"—1 Paral. xxi. 17—or the like.

2.—ADMIRATION. Wondering at the goodness, wisdom, power, and other like attributes of God. "O Lord our Lord, how admirable is Thy name!"—Ps. viii. 2. "O Lord of Hosts, who is like to Thee?" "Thou art mighty, O Lord, and Thy truth is round about Thee"—or the like.

3.—AFFIRMATION. Affirming, for example, that God is just, great, and dreadful; that they are happy that serve Him, and the like. "Thou art just, O Lord: and Thy judgment is right."—Ps. cxviii. 137. For the Lord is high, terrible: a great king over all the earth."—Ps. xlvi. 3. "Blessed is he whom Thou hast chosen, and taken to Thee; he shall dwell in Thy courts."—Ps. lxiv. 5.

4.—BENEDICTION. Blessing God for hearing our prayers, for having redeemed us, and for other benefits which He hath bestowed upon us; and inviting all creatures to do the same. "Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer, nor His mercy from me"—Ps. lxv. 20, etc. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, because He hath visited and wrought the redemption of His people."—Luke i. 68. "All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord: praise and exalt Him above all for ever."—Dan. iii. 57.

5.—COMMINATION, or threatening woe to yourself, unless you improve, unless you obey God's call, etc. "Unless you will be converted, He will brandish His sword; He hath bent His bow, and made it ready"—Ps. vii. 13, etc. "Understand these things, you that forget God; lest He snatch you away, and there be none to deliver you."—Ps. xlix. 22.

6.—Compassion for Christ's labours and sufferings. "I am sorry for thee, my brother Jonathan, exceeding beautiful and amiable."—2 Kings i. 26. "Who would grant me that I might die for Thee?"—2 Kings xviii. 33. "I will not live without wound, saith Saint Bonaventure, because I see Thee full of wounds."—Rod. de Pas. c. 8.

7.—Complaint. Piously complaining as if God had left you. "How long, O Lord, wilt Thou forget me unto the end? How long dost Thou turn away Thy face from me?"—Ps. xii. 1. "Where are Thy ancient mercies, O Lord?"—Ps. lxxxviii. 50, etc. "Lord, why castest Thou off my prayer?"—Ps. lxxxvii. 15.

8.—Compunction and Grief, that by your sins you have been the cause of Christ's sufferings, and of the scourges wherewith God doth chastise the world. "Take me up, and cast me into the sea; for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you."—Jonas i. 12. "I know my iniquity, and my sin is always before me."—Ps. l. 5.

9.—Confession. Acknowledging the benefits of God, and your own infirmity. "I will give glory to Thee, O Lord, O King; and I will praise Thee, O God my Saviour. I will give glory to Thy name: for Thou hast been a helper and protector to me."—Ecclus. li. 1. "There is no health in my flesh; there is no peace for my bones, because of my sins."—Ps. xxxvii. 4.

10.—Congratulation with Christ for His victory over death; with the Blessed Virgin for the glory of her Son, and her own election. "Let us sing to the Lord; for He is gloriously magnified"—Exod. xv. 1, etc. "Thou art the glory of Jerusalem, Thou are the joy of Israel, Thou art the honour of our people"—Judith xv. 10, etc. "We give Thee thanks for Thy great glory."—Ecclesia in Missa.

11.—Consultation. Consulting between our Lord and yourself, what you are to do for Him, what to return for His benefits. "What shall I do to Thee, O Keeper of Men?"—Job vii. 20. "What shall I render

to the Lord, for all the things that He hath rendered to me?"—Ps. cxv. 3.

12.—DESIRE of heavenly and everlasting goods. "How beloved are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul coveteth and fainteth unto the courts of our Lord."—Ps. xli. 2. "As the hart panteth after the fountains of waters; so my soul panteth after Thee, O God."—Ps. xl. 2. "I desire Thee a thousand times, my Jesus; when will You come? When will You make me joyful? When will You give me my fill of You."—Bern. in Job.

13.—DETESTATION. Abominating your own sins and sluggishness. "I have hated and abhorred iniquity."—Ps. cxviii. 163. "I have hated the assembly of the malignant, and with the wicked I will not sit."—Ps. xxv. 5. "What have I in heaven? and besides Thee what do I desire upon earth?"—Ps. lxxii. 25.

14.—DOUBT. Demanding of yourself what you ought to do, and what will become of you, seeing all to be so rigorously judged. "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy face?"—Ps. cxxxviii. 7. "Who is the man that shall live, and not see death; that shall deliver his soul from the hand of hell?"—Ps. lxxxviii. 49—and the like.

15.—EXHORTATION. Exciting yourself to delight in God alone, to open yourself unto Him, to put your whole trust in Him. "Delight in the Lord, and He will give thee the requests of thy heart. Commit thy way to the Lord, and trust in Him, and He will do it."—Ps. xxxvi. 4, 5. "Cast thy care upon the Lord, and He will sustain it."—Ps. liv. 23.

16.—FAITH and CONFIDENCE in the goodness of God, and that by His grace you will overcome all difficulties and temptations, etc. "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?"—Ps. xxvi. 1. "He will not always be angry, nor will He threaten for ever."—Ps. cii. 9. "For by Thee I shall be delivered from temptation; and through my God I shall go over a wall."—Ps. xvii. 30.

17.—GLADNESS or JOY for the propagation of God's glory, for the greatness of His majesty and perfections, and for the fulfilling of His divine will. "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye just, and glory, all ye right of heart."—Ps. xxxi. 11. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall be joyful in my God; because He hath clothed me with the garment of salvation."—Isa. lxi. 10, etc.

18.—GRATITUDE and THANKSGIVING for benefits received. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all He hath done for thee."—Ps. cii. 2. "We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, who art, and who wast, and who art to come."—Apoc. xi. 17.

19.—HUMILIATION. Acknowledging yourself a sinner, a wretch, a worm, your own infirmity, rejoicing therein as occasion of merit, and humility. "I am a worm and no man: the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people."—Ps. xxi. 7. "I will not trust in my bow: neither shall my sword save me."—Ps. xliii. 7.—etc. "It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me, that I may learn Thy justifications."—Ps. cxviii. 71.

20.—IMITATION. Exciting yourself to follow our Lord, and tread His footsteps. "Look, and do according to the pattern."—Exod. xxv. 40. "Be ye therefore followers of God, as most dear children."—Ephes. v. 1. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."—Rom. xiii. 14. "I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest."—Luke ix. 57.

21.—INVITATION. Inviting our Lord to visit, help, and save you. "Arise, why sleepest Thou, O Lord? arise, and cast us not off to the end."—Ps. xliii. 23. "Turn again, O God of hosts; look down from heaven, and see, and visit this vineyard."—Ps. lxxix. 15.

22.—LOVE. Professing yourself to love God above all things. "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee."—John xxi. 16. "I will love Thee, O Lord, my strength."—Ps. xvii. 2. And exhorting all men to do the same, "O love the Lord, all ye His saints."—Ps. xxx. 24.

23.—NARRATION. Recounting what God hath done for you or others, or what you have done for Him. "The Lord ruleth me: and I shall want nothing. He hath set me in a place of pasture."—Ps. xxii. 1, 2. "In Thee have our fathers hoped; they have hoped, and Thou hast delivered them."—Ps. xxi. 5. "I have not hid Thy justice within my heart. I have declared Thy truth and Thy salvation."—Ps. xxxix. 11.

24.—OBLATION. Offering yourself to God, to serve Him, to obey Him in all things, and to suffer for Him. "O Lord, I am Thy servant; I am Thy servant, and the son of Thy handmaid."—Ps. cxv. 16. "I am become as a beast before Thee; and I am always with Thee."—Ps. lxxii. 23. "I am ready for scourges; and my sorrow is continually before me."—Ps. xxxvii. 18.

25.—OBSECRATION. Earnestly imploring the divine aid, and such spiritual graces as you stand most in need of. "Help us, O God our Saviour; and for the glory of Thy name, O Lord, deliver us."—Ps. lxxviii. 9. "Turn to me, O Lord, and deliver my soul, O save me for Thy mercy's sake."—Ps. vi. 5.

26.—PETITION. Craving to be heard, illuminated, directed, preserved, and the like. "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and my supplication: give ear to my tears."—Ps. xxxviii. 13. "O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me."—Ps. lxix. 2. "Direct my way in Thy sight."—Ps. v. 9. "Direct me in Thy truth, and teach me."—Ps. xxiv. 5. Keep me, O Lord, from the hand of the wicked."—Ps. cxxxix. 5, etc.

27.—PRAISE. Extolling the power, wisdom, and mercy of our Lord; and inviting all creatures to do the same. "Great is our Lord, and great is His power: and of His wisdom there is no number."—Ps. cxlvi. 5. "My soul doth magnify the Lord."—Luke i. 46. "Praise ye the Lord from the heavens; praise ye Him in the high places. Praise ye Him, all His angels."—Ps. cxlviii. 1, 2.

28.—PREFERRING. Having a greater esteem and concern for heavenly and divine objects, than for the

earthly and transitory things of this world. "Better is one day in Thy courts above thousands. I have chosen to be an abject in the house of my God, rather than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners."—Ps. lxxxiii. 11. "Better is a little to the just, than the great riches of the wicked."—Ps. xxxiv. 16.

29.—PERSONIFICATION. Imagining to yourself that God speaketh unto you, reproving your negligence, or exhorting you to fervour. "How art thou turned unto Me into that which is good for nothing, O strange vineyard?"—Jer. ii. 21. "I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes."—Isa. v. 2. "How is the gold become dim, the finest colour changed."—Lam. iv. 1. "Return, O rebellious Israel, (soul), and I will not turn away My face from you."—Jer. iii. 12.

30.—PURPOSE. Purposing to serve God better, to resist temptations, and to propagate His glory. "I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue."—Ps. xxxviii. 2. "I will pursue after my enemies, and overtake them; and I will not turn again till they are consumed."—Ps. xvii. 38. "I will declare Thy name to my brethren; in the midst of the Church will I praise Thee."—Ps. xxi. 23.

31. RENUNCIATION or ABNEGATION. Denying your own will, and renouncing all honour and glory, as due to God alone. "Not my will, but Thine be done."—Luke xxii. 42. "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Thy name give glory."—Ps. cxiii. 9. "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof."—Matt. viii. 8.

32.—REPREHENSION. Rebuking yourself for being slothful, irresolute, a lover of toys, etc. "How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou rise out of thy sleep?"—Prov. vi. 9. "How long will you love childishness, and fools covet those things which are hurtful to themselves."—Prov. i. 22. "How long shall I take counsels in my soul?"—Ps. xii. 2.

33.—RESIGNATION. Resigning yourself to the will of

God. "Lord, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."—Matt. xxvi. 39. "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."—Matt. vi. 10. "As it hath pleased the Lord, so is it done: blessed be the name of the Lord."—Job i. 21.

34.—SOLACE or ENCOURAGEMENT. Animating yourself to expect our Lord, to trust in Him, and the like. "Expect our Lord, do manfully and let thy heart take courage, and wait thou for the Lord."—Ps. xxvi. 14. "Why art thou sad, O my soul? and why dost thou disquiet me? Hope in God, for I will still give praise to Him."—Ps. xlii. 5, 6.

35.—SOLICITATION. As it were urging God to give you speedy aid. "O God, my God, look upon me; why hast Thou forsaken me?"—Ps. xxi. 2. Bow down Thy ear to me; make haste to deliver me."—Ps. xxx. 3. "Arise, why sleepest Thou, O Lord? Arise, and cast us not off to the end."—Ps. xliii. 23.

36.—ZEAL. Desiring that the glory of God may be propagated, and His enemies humbled. "O God, the heathens are come into Thy inheritance, they have defiled Thy holy temple."—Ps. lxxviii. 1. "How long, O God, shall the enemy reproach: is the adversary to provoke Thy name for ever?"—Ps. lxxiii. 10. "Let God arise, and let His enemies be dispersed."—Ps. lxvii. 2.

These, or other like affections, you may make use of for your colloquies; and these, or other such versicles taken out of Scripture, may perhaps, help you to enter with greater facility into colloquies, which afterwards you may prosecute more at large, as your affection shall suggest, and the unction of the Divine Spirit shall teach you.

And although it be expedient, as hath been said, to break into these colloquies, at any time during the Meditation, yet this same is to be done with more earnest endeavour and exactness in the end; sometimes calling upon the Eternal Father, sometimes upon the Son, and other times upon the Holy Ghost; sometimes

also upon the Blessed Virgin, our angel guardian, the saints our patrons, imploring their aid and intercession, giving thanks, etc., as the subject may require. Unto this colloquy is to be joined some vocal prayer, as the *Pater Noster*, if the colloquy be directed to God the Father; *Anima Christi sanctifica me*, "The soul of Christ sanctify me," if to the Son; *Veni Creator*, if to the Holy Ghost; *Ave Maria*, or some like, if to the Blessed Virgin, or to the saints.—*Manual.*

It is a commendable practice of many having ended their Meditation, to note down in brief, in some little book for that end, their good purposes, and the chief lights which God communicated unto them in their prayer, lest otherwise they come to be fruitless: for as it sufficeth not for the bringing forth of fruit, that good seed be cast into the ground, unless it be kept and fostered in the bosom of the earth, so neither will it be available for our soul's spiritual good, only to have heard the voice or word of God in prayer; but, as Christ said, "Blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it."—Luke xi. 28.

JOURNAL OF MEDITATIONS,

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THE FEAST OF ALL SAINTS.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ in the Eucharist, as God and Head of all Saints.

"O God my God, to Thee do I watch at break of day."
Ps. lxii. 1.

IMAGINE yourself among the blessed company of Saints in heaven, contemplating the divine face of God; and consider, 1.—How great is the glory, riches, beauty, and majesty of that infinite essence. "Thousands of thousands minstered to Him: and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before Him," said Daniel, vii. 10. Think how great is His power. "Whatsoever the Lord pleased He hath done, in heaven, in earth, in the sea, and in all the deeps."—Ps. cxxxiv. 6. How great His wisdom. "Great is our Lord, and great is His power: and of His wisdom there is no number."—Ps. cxlvi. 5. How great His immensity, which is higher than heaven, deeper than hell, longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.—Job xi. 8, 9. And so of His other divine attributes.

Consider 2.—This so great a majesty, and head of all the Saints whose memory you celebrate this day, disdaineth not to enter the cottage of your soul, and even desireth it Himself, according to that: "My delights are to be with the children of men"—Prov. viii. 31—not that He stands in need of you, who are but dust and ashes; but to enrich your poverty with His infinite treasures. Think, therefore, with yourself what you are, and who He is, and cry out with the prophet, "What is man that Thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that Thou visitest him?"—Ps. viii. 5.

Consider 3.—You must diligently prepare your soul against the coming of so great a guest; according to that: "Be prepared to meet thy God, O Israel."—Amos iv. 12. Wherefore cleanse it first with the greatest possible purity, not only from mortal, but also from venial sin. For, "Blessed are the clean of heart (saith Christ), for they shall see God."—Matt. v. 8. Then enkindle in yourself an ardent love, that so you may deserve to keep Him long with you, according to that: "If any one love Me, etc., we will come to him, and will make our abode with him."—John xiv. 23.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE FEAST OF ALL SAINTS.*

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ in the Eucharist as King.

To-day I shall dine with the King.—*Esth.* v. 12.

CONSIDER 1.—Christ is truly a King, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and not only of one province, or portion of the earth, but of all heaven and earth, of men and angels. "I am appointed King by Him over Sion"—Ps. ii. 6—etc.; and not for a time only, as other kings upon earth, but "for ever and ever."—Exod. xv. 18. Wherefore all duties, services, and tribute, which subjects owe to their king, are much more due from you to Christ. See whether you have performed them hitherto or not.

Consider 2.—What you would do if some earthly prince were to come to your house; how carefully would you have it swept, cleansed, adorned, and set in order, lest there should be anything that might offend the prince's eye. How much more ought the house of your soul be adorned, which the King of heaven will vouchsafe this day to enter in the holy Eucharist; for, as David saith, "The house is prepared not for man, but for God."—1 Paral. xxix. 1.

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* This and the other Meditations on the Sundays of this Month, are to be placed between week and week, as they come in their turn.

And if those women, mentioned in Esther, prepared themselves a whole year to appear but once before the King Assuerus—"For six months they were anointed with oil and myrrh (saith the Scripture), and for other six months they used certain perfumes and sweet spices"—Esth. ii. 12—how much greater care ought to be taken to appear worthily before Christ our Lord?

Consider 3.—That you are poor, and have nothing in your soul fit to entertain such a royal guest; beseech Him to send beforehand, as great princes are wont to do, furniture and provision worthy of Himself. Besides, if you desire to be pleasing in His sight, you must put off all carnal and worldly affections, and with all submission hearken to His interior inspirations: "Incline thy ear: and forget thy people and thy father's house (saith the royal prophet), and the king shall greatly desire thy beauty."—Ps. xliv. 11, 12.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE FEAST OF ALL SAINTS.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as your Father.

"I will arise, and will go to my Father."—*Luke* xv. 18.

CONSIDER 1.—Almighty God, although He be infinitely powerful and rich, and compared with whom all creatures are "as a drop of a bucket, and as the smallest grain of a balance"—Is. xl. 15—yet He disdaineth not to be called, and to be truly, our Father; and what is more, "Call none your father upon earth (saith Christ): for one is your Father, who is in heaven."—Matt. xxiii. 9. And Christ Himself, by a special title, would be styled by the prophet, "Father of the world to come"—Is. ix. 6—and not content with that, He also taketh upon Him something more than the affection even of a mother; for, "if she should forget her infant, yet will not I (saith He) forget thee."—Is. xlix. 15. Ponder how excellently Christ performed both these offices, not only begetting us to a

spiritual life, but also feeding and nourishing us with His own precious body and blood.

Consider 2.—How you, like the prodigal child, have foolishly left so loving and so rich a father, and gone after the swine of this world; yet He is still ready to receive you again, and clothe you with the first robe; for, "as a father hath compassion on his children (saith David), so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear Him: for He knoweth our frame."—Ps. cii. 13. He expects you to-day in the Eucharist with open arms to embrace you, and to give you His blessing, so you do but worthily dispose yourself.

Consider 3.—The best disposition will be, 1. An humble begging of pardon. "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before Thee."—Luke xv. 18. 2. A firm resolution of never more going from Him, but striving with all your endeavour to imitate the perfection of your Heavenly Father according to that of the Apostle: "Be ye followers of God, as most dear children."—Ephes. v. 1. Wherefore with a filial confidence represent unto your Father, when He cometh, all your necessities; for if fathers "know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask Him?"—Luke xi. 13.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE FEAST OF ALL SAINTS.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as your Brother.

"Who shall give thee to me for my brother, sucking the breasts of my mother, that I may find thee without, and kiss thee?"
—*Cant.* viii. 1.

Consider 1.—Christ, to make us the more sensible of His love towards us, took upon Him not only the name of Father, but also that of a Brother; that so by a certain equality, which is wont to be between brothers, He might the more familiarly insinuate Himself unto us; "for which cause He is not ashamed (saith the Apostle) to call us brethren, saying: I will declare thy name to My breth-

ren"—Heb. ii. 11; and after His resurrection, "Go, tell My brethren (saith He) that they go into Galilee."—Matt. xxviii. 10. Think what an honour it is to be brother to so great a prince. And if the "brother that is helped by his brother is (as the wise man saith) as a strong city"—Prov. xviii. 19—what comfort and help may you expect from such a brother?

Consider 2.—Your inhuman dealing with Christ, who have sold Him, not for twenty pieces of silver, as did the sons of Jacob their brother Joseph—Gen. xxxvii. 28—but perhaps for some slight or filthy pleasure; and even like another Cain, you have murdered this brother Abel—Gen. iv. 8—of yours by your sins, and nailed Him on the cross; and yet He, forgetting and forgiving all, invites you to Himself, saying with Joseph, "I am Joseph your brother, etc., fear not. Come to me, and I will give you all the good things of Egypt, that you may eat the marrow of the land"—Gen. xlv. 3 & 18; and what is the marrow of the land, but His precious body and blood, "the corn of the elect, and wine springing forth virgins?"—Zac. ix. 17.

Consider 3.—How you are to go meet this brother of yours. Imitate Jacob who went with presents to meet his enraged brother Esau.—Gen xxxiii. 10. Let your presents be, 1. "A contrite and humble heart, which He will not despise."—Ps. l. 19. 2. A firm purpose of not sinning any more against your brother.—Gen xlii. 21. 3. A desire of imitating His virtues, that by the likeness of your life and behaviour to His, He may appear to be, what truly He is, "the first-born amongst many brethren."—Rom. viii. 29.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE FEAST OF ALL SAINTS.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as your Master.

"The Master is come and calleth for thee."—*John* xi. 28.

CONSIDER 1.—What ignorance men are in, especially of heavenly things, and appertaining to their salvation.

We often "call evil good, and good evil, putting darkness for light, and light for darkness."—Is. v. 20. We commonly make virtues of our vices, and virtue we hate as folly. Therefore the Wisdom of the Eternal Father came down from heaven, to be unto us a master, to teach us the way of truth. "You call me Master and Lord (saith He), and you do well, for so I am."—John xiii. 13.

Consider 2.—How willingly you ought to hearken to this Master, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."—Colos. ii. 3. "The prime incitement of learning (saith St. Ambrose) is the excellency of the Master."—Ambr. 1. 2. de Virg. What more excellent than Christ our Lord, who is truth itself, and can neither deceive nor be deceived? "The Queen of the south, etc., came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold a greater than Solomon here"—Matt. xii. 42; and here in the Eucharist He is ready to teach you the science of the Saints and of salvation, if you come rightly disposed.

Consider 3.—There is required due preparation on your part, that you may deserve to hear with profit the wisdom of this heavenly Master; for He will have His scholars to be, 1. Pure from all sin; "For wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins."—Wisd. i. 4. 2. Humble and little in their own eyes. "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones."—Matt. xi. 25. 3. Well mortified, and detached from worldly things. "Whom shall He teach knowledge? and whom shall He make to understand the hearing? them that are weaned from the milk, that are drawn away from the breasts."—Is. xxviii. 9. See, therefore, you be thus disposed when you go to Him.

MAN'S LAST END.—PART I.

Consider 1.—What you were some hundred years ago; just nothing, and so you would have remained for ever, but that it pleased God to take you out of your nothing; and whereas He could have joined to your first or original matter infinite other forms, He would endow you with a rational one, and place you in this world among men. But to what end? not to indulge in unlawful amusements; not

to eat and drink; not to seek after honours and vanities of this life; nor finally to end your days like brute beasts. "The Lord hath made all things for Himself"—Prov. xvi. 4—that you might serve and worship Him in this world, and at last attain to life everlasting.

Consider 2.—The excellency of this end. All other living creatures are created stooping down to their food, and carry about them souls that are to end with time. Man alone is elevated to that sublime end of praising and serving his Creator, and, after a short and holy life, to be crowned with immortal glory. With good reason David, full of admiration, breaketh forth into those words: "What is man that Thou art mindful of him? . . . Thou hast made him a little less than the angels; Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour: and hast set him over the works of Thy hands."—Ps. viii. 5, 6.

Consider 3.—How much you are obliged to your Creator for so great a benefit; and withal, how justly He requireth of you that you direct your whole life to this only end of His divine praise and service. This, therefore, ought to be the only aim of all your actions, and even your thoughts, viz., to honour God and serve Him alone. Wherefore, say with the Prophet, "I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall be always in my mouth."—Ps. xxxiii. 2. You are born for heaven; see you degenerate not: "See you carry not (saith St. Bernard), in a straight and upright body a crooked soul"—Bern. in Cant. Serm. 24,—that is, deformedly bent upon earthly things.

MAN'S LAST END.—PART II.

Consider 1.—Seeing your end in this life is to praise and serve God alone, and seeing that in whatsoever kind, the end is the measure or square of all such things as appertain thereunto, it followeth evidently that you are to make use of all other creatures, so far as they conduce to His service and honour; and on the other hand, to avoid them, if they in any way withdraw you from Him. Wherefore you are not to desire riches, honours, comforts of this life, nor even learning or health, otherwise than they may help you the better to serve God. For, as that holy man has well remarked, "Better is the humble countryman that serveth

God, than the proud philosopher who, neglecting himself, considereth the course of the heavens."—Tho. a Kemp. de Imit. lib. 1. c. 2.

Consider 2.—And examine yourself in particular whether you have any disordered affection to the things above mentioned. See whether you be ready to suffer poverty, reproach, sickness, and death itself, if God thereby might be the more glorified in you. Offer yourself to your Creator with a total disregard to all things else, except so far as they contribute to His greater glory. Say with the Prophet: "My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready" —Ps. cvii. 2,—and with Christ our Lord: "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt: Thy will be done."—Matt. xxvi. 39, 42.

Consider 3.—How foolishly they do, who have any other end than God in their actions; who employ their labours in purchasing honours, riches, renown, pleasures, and the like. No otherwise do these, than would he who, being to sail to the east, should steer his course to the west, and so never come to his journey's end. Of such it is rightly said by the Prophet: "You have sowed much and brought in little: you have eaten, but have not had enough: you have drunk, but have not been filled with drink."—Agg. i. 6. Lastly, "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment they go down to hell."—Job xxi. 13.

MAN'S DUTY TOWARDS GOD.—PART I.

Consider 1.—The whole duty of man towards God is comprised in that short sentence, "decline from evil, and do good."—Ps. xxxvi. 27. These are the two principal points of a Christian life, they are the two wings whereby we must fly up to heaven, the two arms wherewith we are to lay fast hold on the kingdom of God.—Job. With respect to the first part, man's life in the holy Scripture is said to be a warfare upon earth; and Christians are termed soldiers, carefully standing upon their guard, for resisting the suggestions and temptations of sin.

Consider 2.—In this warfare we are to resist sin even unto death; never giving over, or thinking ourselves secure, but always standing in arms with watchful care and fear; Job, notwithstanding all his integrity, discussed and feared every the least of his actions.—Job ix. 28. David, a man

according to God's own heart, did every night brush, "or sweep his spirit."—Ps. lxxvi. 7. St. John Baptist that was sanctified in his mother's womb, led an austere retired life, "that he might not (as the Church singeth of him) stain his life with a light slip of his tongue."—Hymn ad Mat. de St. Johan. Bapt. St. Paul, though confirmed in grace, and rapt to the third heaven, could say of himself: "So I fight, not as one beating the air; but I chastise my body, and bring it into subjection."—1 Cor. ix. 26, 27. Think not, therefore, much of any pains, for the avoiding of sin.

Consider 3.—We must not only withstand the actual committing of sin, but also the consent of mind. "Take heed thou never consent to sin"—Tob. iv. 6,—and resist all delectation and suggestion; for, as St. Gregory saith, "In suggestion is the seed of sin, in delectation is the nourishment, in consent the perfection."—Greg. ad Inter. lib. Aug. Cantuar. Examine yourself what vigilance and caution you hold over your thoughts, words, and actions, how you avoid occasions of danger, and how you resist the suggestions of the flesh, the world, and the devil. Take up your weapons with the holy Saints of fasting, prayer, and mortification of your flesh, that you may also with them be crowned with a glorious victory.

MAN'S DUTY TOWARDS GOD.—PART II.

Consider 1.—The other part of man's duty is to labour in the exercise of good works, thereby to please and serve God. Wherefore heaven is sometimes proposed unto us as a rich jewel; sometimes as a treasure hidden in a field, which we are to seek out with some pain and labour, and to purchase with the sale of all we have—Matt. xiii. 44; sometimes again as a goal or prize, which we are to gain by running on in the race of virtue and perfection—1 Cor. ix. 24; and almost everywhere as the reward and crown of virtuous actions. See therefore you act the industrious merchant, and by the continual exercise of good works, "lay up to yourselves treasures in heaven."—Matt. vi. 20.

Consider 2.—The several motives, which you have to labour in the pursuit and increase of virtue. 1. The will of God. "This is the will of God, your sanctification."—1 Thess. iv. 3; and, "be you perfect, as also your Heavenly

Father is perfect."—Matt. v. 48. 2. The name of a Christian, whose profession is sanctity, and therefore Christians are called by the Apostle, "a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation," etc.—1 Pet. ii. 9. 3. The examples of Saints of both sexes, and of all conditions and callings; whereby the great St. Augustine encouraged himself, saying, "cannot you do what such and such," viz., young men and tender virgins have done before you? The greatness of the reward, "Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven."—Matt. v. 12.

Consider 3.—The many helps which God hath afforded you for your spiritual profit. 1. His divine word declared unto you in holy Scripture, in sermons, in pious books, which inform your understanding, and inflame your will towards virtue. 2. The assistance of divine grace always ready at hand to begin, prosecute, and perfect any good work. 3. The holy Sacraments instituted by Christ to beget us to a spiritual life, and to maintain, nourish, and strengthen us in the same. 4. The life, merits, and passion of our Saviour, who is "the way, the truth, and the life"—John xiv. 6; and who "gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us, etc., and cleanse to Himself a people acceptable, a pursuer of good works."—Tit. ii. 14.

IMPEDIMENTS OF OUR END AND DUTY:

OR SIN; AND FIRST,

THE SIN OF LUCIFER AND HIS ANGELS.

We must first remove the impediments which draw us from our end and duty, and then procure the supplies of virtue to attain it. Now the only thing which debarred us from God is sin: how detestable sin is, in the sight of God; and how greatly deserving of punishment, you may learn by the fall, first of Lucifer, then of Adam.

Consider, therefore, 1.—In what glory Lucifer with the other angels was created; for, of him is understood that of Ezechiel: "Thou wast the seal of resemblance, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou wast in the pleasures of

the paradise of God: every precious stone was thy covering: the sardine, the topaz," etc.—Ezech. xxviii. 12. These precious stones, or ornaments, were: 1. Pure spirituality, without any admixture of a body. 2. Immortality. 3. Wonderful subtlety of wit and understanding. 4. An universal knowledge of all inferior things. 5. Might and power above all other creatures. 6. Free will, and command over his own actions. 7. Eminent sanctity proceeding from the gifts of grace. 8. He was an inhabitant of the empyreal heaven.

Consider 2.—How in a moment he lost and obscured all these gifts of nature and grace, elevating himself by pride above himself, and (as all sinners do) affecting what was unlawful for him. See how he was, immediately after his sin, cast down headlong into hell with his companions, without hopes of mercy. Ponder those words of St. Peter: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned: but delivered them, drawn down by infernal ropes to the lower hell, unto torments, to be reserved unto judgment," etc.—2 Pet. ii. 4—how much more us miserable wretches.

Consider 3.—And apply these things to yourself. See 1. What gifts and benefits you have received of God. 2. How you have abused them even against God Himself. 3. The angels' sin was but one, yours innumerable, in thought, word, and deed. Admire, lament, implore mercy, etc.

THE SIN OF OUR FIRST PARENTS IN PARADISE.

Consider 1.—The most happy state wherein Adam was created by God. 1. He was created to the similitude of God Himself, and endowed with free will. 2. He was then immortal, and not subject to any miseries. 3. He had an infused knowledge of natural things. 4. He was plentifully stored with gifts of divine grace. 5. His inferior appetite was perfectly subject to reason, by original justice. 6. Nothing could be added to the delights of paradise wherein he was placed, nothing more could be wished. 7. And lastly, from a paradise on earth, he was to pass immediately to that of heaven, not by death, but by transmigration. How happy had his posterity been, if they might have continued in that blessed state!

Consider 2.—How being forbidden to eat of one certain tree, notwithstanding, by the persuasion of the devil, and the incitements of his wife, he transgressed the command of God, and was thereupon despoiled of the ornaments of grace, and struck with that dreadful sentence, "Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return."—Gen. iii. 19. What miseries hath this one man's sin brought upon us all? and yet this transgression at first sight seemeth but small, and in a light matter.

Consider 3.—How much heavier judgment and punishment do you deserve at God's hands who have so often, and for such trifles, transgressed His law? You should long since have been cast, not as Adam, out of paradise, but out of the world, who have so often provoked the Lord of the world; and yet He hath expected you hitherto to do penance. Do it therefore immediately, and "delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day; for His wrath shall come on a sudden" (saith Ecclesiasticus), "and in the time of vengeance He will destroy thee."—Ecclus. v. 8, 9.

THE GRIEVOUSNESS OF MORTAL SIN.—PART I.

The punishments due to it.

Consider 1.—God is most just in inflicting punishments, which, notwithstanding, He always doth below our deserts (as the divines speak), though on the contrary His rewards are above our merits. Ponder, therefore, the greatness of the offence, by the grievousness of the punishment due to every sin. Enter with your imagination into hell, and consider attentively what God hath prepared there even for one mortal sin. Contemplate those fiery furnaces, those torrents of sulphur, the gnashing of teeth, and howling of the damned, and the like; and reflect that all this is to last for ever, without any hopes of releasement. "And which of you (saith Isaias) can dwell with devouring fire?"—Is. xxxiii. 14.

Consider 2.—What a folly it were to offend a prince, by whom you knew you were to be most cruelly tortured upon the rack. How much more, then, to offend God, "that can destroy both soul and body into hell."—Matt. x. 28. And if so great punishment be due to one mortal sin, though

even that cometh short of its deserts, what an excess of torments will be due to your many sins? Look back upon the days of your youth, and think what would have become of you, if you had died immediately after such or such a sin; and acknowledge so many distinct favours of God towards you, as you have committed sins, after which you were not presently cast into hell. Say, therefore, with the prophet: "I will praise Thee, O Lord my God, etc., for Thy mercy is great towards me: and Thou hast delivered my soul out of the lower hell."—Ps. lxxxv. 12, 13.

Consider 3.—How much you are bound to so patient a Lord, who hath so long expected you to do penance. Take heed lest patience abused turn into fury. Wherefore humbly crave pardon for what is past, and purpose amendment for the future.

THE GRIEVOUSNESS OF MORTAL SIN.—PART II.

By reason of the Dignity of the Persons offended.

Consider 1.—The greater the dignity is of the person offended, the greater is the offence. Whence greater is his crime that wounded his king, or father, than his that hurteth only some one of the common sort; wherefore ponder who He is whom you have so often provoked by your sin. 1. He is God of infinite majesty, at whose beck the pillars of heaven tremble and dread.—Job xxvi. 11. 2. He is omnipotent, able to destroy you in a moment, and chastise you a thousand ways. 3. He is everywhere present, whose eyes are open upon all the ways of the children of Adam; and yet you have the impudence to do that before His eyes, which you would be ashamed to do in the sight of men.

Consider 2.—The many titles of His goodness towards you; for these also do aggravate the sin. 1. He hath created you of nothing, preserved you hitherto as a father, and governed you as a guardian. 2. He hath drawn you out of the jaws of hell, and redeemed you with His precious blood. 3. He it is that sanctifies you even to this day, strengthening you with the holy Sacraments, preventing you with His inspirations, and drawing on you, a thousand ways, towards the crown of glory. And could you find in

your heart so often and so foully to abuse such a benefactor? "Is this the return thou makest to the Lord, O foolish and senseless people? Is not He thy Father, that hath possessed thee, and made thee, and created thee? . . . Thou hast forsaken the God that begot thee, and hast forgotten the Lord that created thee."—Deut. xxxii. 6, 18.

Consider 3.—How greatly you ought to be ashamed of such ingratitude, and grieved for having offended so great a Majesty. Abuse not the treasures of so infinite a goodness, patience, and longanimity; but speedily do penance, lest otherwise "thou treasurest up to thyself wrath (as the Apostle saith), against the day of wrath."—Rom. ii. 5.

THE GRIEVOUSNESS OF MORTAL SIN.—PART III.

By reason of the Baseness of the Offender.

Consider 1.—It would be judged a great offence if one prince should strike another; but much less than if a subject should strike his sovereign; for, the offence is proportioned to the inequality of the offender and the person offended, and what greater inequality can there be than between God and you? Think, therefore, what you are that dare reproach the Lord of Hosts, and in His sight commit enormous crimes, as if there were no power in heaven to punish you. As to your body, you are a contemptible worm, made of the slime of the earth. "Grass, flower of the field"—Ps. cii. 15; "a vapour appearing for a little while."—James iv. 15. "Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return."—Gen. iii. 19. And as St. Bernard elegantly expresses it: "You were unclean seed, you are a vessel of impurity, you will be food for worms."—Bern. in for. hon. vit. Why, therefore, are earth and ashes proud?

Consider 2.—As to your soul, what are you? Created of nothing, and to nothing you would return, if God did not preserve you, without whom you cannot so much as move a finger. 1. You are conceived in sin, born and bred in sin, nor is there any sin so heinous which you would not commit, if God's grace did not restrain you. 2. As to knowledge, how little is that you know, and how many things are there that you understand not? As to power and

ability, how little is it that you are able to do, and how innumerable are the things above your reach.

Consider 3.—What are you now compared to all men in the world? what to the whole multitude of angels? and what are all these again in respect of Almighty God? "For the whole world before Thee is as the least grain of the balance, and as a drop of the morning dew, that falleth down upon the earth."—Wisd. xi. 23. And yet, vile miscreant that you are, you have had the boldness, so often most imprudently, to provoke a Lord of such dread and majesty to indignation against you. Do penance, and sin no more.

THE GRIEVOUSNESS OF MORTAL SIN.—PART IV.

By reason of the Vileness of the Object.

Consider 1.—It would aggravate the fault, if one should leave a friend, or do him some notorious injury for a slight and frivolous matter. For example, should cut his brother's throat for a tennis-ball. The whole world, in respect of God, is "as nothing, and vanity"—Is. xl. 17,—as Isaias saith. He would, therefore, highly injure God, who is his supreme and everlasting good, that should but once leave Him, though it were to gain the whole world; but much more, he that should condemn him for trifles. Hence He, as one amazed, complaineth of His contempt by His Prophet. "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this: and ye gates thereof, be very desolate, saith the Lord. For My people have done two evils. They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and have digged to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water."—Jer. ii. 12, 13. Ponder how fitly God is termed an endless fountain, flowing with all manner of good, and all things of this world leaky and broken cisterns; they seem to have something in them, but, in truth, do not hold water.

Consider 2.—In particular, for what trifles you have often forsaken God, perhaps that you might please men, enjoy some short pleasure, satisfy your passion or greedy appetite, gain some vain reputation, and the like. Esau did foolishly in selling his birthright for a mess of pottage, but Judas did worse in selling Christ for thirty pieces of silver; worst

of all, the Jews, in preferring the miscreant and murderer, Barabbas, to Christ. Yet you imitate these as often as you prefer some short pleasure or evil action to God Himself, and your own right to the kingdom of heaven.

Consider 3.—How you ought to be sorry for your sins past, and wary for the future. St. Cyprian saith well: "How greatly we have sinned, so greatly let us bewail."—Cypr. Ser. de lap. We have a good Lord, and, "according to His greatness (as Ecclesiasticus saith), so also is His mercy with Him."—Ecclus. ii. 23.

THE GRIEVOUSNESS OF MORTAL SIN.—PART V.

For the Damages and bad Consequences it bringeth.

Consider 1.—All men naturally flee from things that are hurtful. Now there is nothing in the whole world so pernicious as sin, whence Solomon: "Sin maketh nations miserable."—Prov. xiv. 34. And, "He that shall offend in one point shall lose many things."—Ecclus. Ponder, therefore, the damages which it brings with it, and first in this life, in which: 1. It obscureth the understanding, and, by false persuasions, withdraws it from the truth. 2. It alienates the will from the supreme and sovereign good to that which is only counterfeited, and makes it even have a loathing of spiritual things. 3. It makes reason a slave to brutal appetites. 4. It depraveth all the senses with unlawful delights. 5. It depriveth the whole man of the friendship and protection of God. 6. It robbeth him of habitual grace, and the ornaments of virtue; and of a child of God, makes him a slave of the devil, an ulcer and sink of all filth and abomination.

Consider 2.—As to the other life. 1. It depriveth man of the vision of God, and those joys, "which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard."—1 Cor. ii. 9. It excludeth him from the company of the holy saints and angels, and that for ever. 3. It makes him liable to everlasting fire, without any hopes of releasement. 4. It placeth him in a most loathsome dungeon, and among the detestable crew of the damned, under the cruel tyranny of the devil, from which no power is able to deliver him.

Consider 3.—And add to all this, that every one by sin-

ning, doth trample under feet the precious blood of Christ shed for our sins; turneth God's gifts into so many weapons against himself, and even destroyeth God Himself (as much as lieth in him), and, in a manner, grieveth the saints and the Blessed Virgin; hurteth man by his wicked example; and, lastly, makes a triumph of himself for the devils. With good reason then crieth out Ecclesiasticus: "Flee from sins as from the face of a serpent, etc. The teeth thereof are the teeth of a lion, killing the souls of men."—Ecclus. xxi. 2, 3.

AVOIDING VENIAL SINS.—PART I.

As disposing to Mortal.

Consider 1.—He that thoroughly hateth mortal sin, must also endeavour what he can to avoid venial, otherwise, "He that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little."—Ecclus. xix. 1. For venial sins dispose unto mortal. 1. In regard of the matter, or object, which, being for the most part the same in both, affords an easy passage from the less that is of custom, to a greater transgression.—St. Thos. 12. 2 æq. 86. a 1. By reason of our own forces, which are much weakened by frequent venial sins. Whence it is that we are presently cast to the ground at the rising of any strong temptation, according to that—"By slothfulness a building shall be brought down: and through the weakness of hands, the house shall drop through."—Eccles. x. 18. With regard to the exterior assistance of God, which He doth often subtract for venial sins, such especially as are more voluntary, for he deserveth little help that is sparing of his own endeavour. "He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly."—2 Cor. ix. 6.

Consider 2.—What caution that man useth that hath straw, hay, or gun-powder lodged in his house, lest any spark of fire should light thereon. "All flesh is grass"—Is. xl. 6—(or hay), and no gun-powder taketh fire sooner than doth concupiscence. Look upon holy David, through an unwary glance of his eyes miserably fallen, first into adultery, then into murder. Take heed, therefore, of the least sparkle; resist the beginnings, and "dash thy little

ones against the rock"—Ps. cxxxvi. 9,—that is, bad motions while they are but little.

Consider 3.—From slight wounds not looked unto in time, and festered, proceed malignant fevers in the body, and death itself; the same happeneth to the soul by venial sin. Wherefore look into all your actions, and see wherein you are wont more frequently to receive a wound, and arm yourself in time. Endeavour to the utmost of your power to refrain not only from evil itself, but also "from all appearance of evil"—1 Thess. v. 22—as the Apostle admonisheth.

AVOIDING VENIAL SINS.—PART II.

For the Damages they bring with them.

Consider 1.—We ought to avoid venial sins, not only because they dispose to mortal, but also their own peculiar deformity; for (as St. Augustine saith)—Aug. 1. 50, Hom. & Ser. 41, de Sanctis—they are like ulcers on the body, and do so deface the beauty of the soul, that she becometh thereby in disgrace with her heavenly Spouse. Think with yourself, if you were to pass through dirty ways in a pure white and precious garment, what care you would take to keep it clean. Souls invested with habitual grace are "whiter than snow, purer than milk, fairer than the sapphire."—Lam. iv. 7. With how much more care, then, are we to preserve them without spot or blemish through the foul ways of this life.

Consider 2.—Other damages which these sins, especially if frequent, bring with them. 1. They diminish the fervour of charity, like cold water cast into a vessel of warm liquid. 2. They keep back the soul in her progress, as a burden doth him that walketh. 3. They diminish the merit of good works, as "dying flies spoil the sweetness of the ointment."—Eccles. x. 1. 4. They are an impediment to prayer and devotion. 5. They abate the efficacy of the Sacraments. 6. They hinder the increase both of grace in this life, and glory in the next. 7. They are pleasing to the devils, displeasing to the angels. 8. They make God Himself to have a loathing of us, according to that, "I would thou wert cold, or hot. But because thou art luke-

warm, . . . I will begin to vomit thee out of My mouth." —Apoc. iii. 15, 16.

Consider 3.—It followeth hence, that it is not lawful, for the conversion of the whole world, to commit one single venial sin. And, although all are to avoid it, yet chiefly such as have consecrated themselves to God, of whom He exacteth perfect purity. Therefore He enjoineth every one of His Levites, "Thou shalt be perfect, and without spot before the Lord thy God."—Deut. xviii. 13. Examine your life and actions, and do your best to live without spot or blemish.

AVOIDING VENIAL SINS.—PART III.

The Punishment due unto them.

Consider 1.—That of David: "Thou art just, O Lord: and Thy judgment is right."—Ps. cxviii. 137. And yet He hath inflicted most heavy punishments for sin, in the judgment of most only venial. That thence you might understand the grievousness of them. 1. He struck Mary, sister to Moses, with a horrible leprosy, for lightly murmuring against her brother, notwithstanding his earnest intercession for her pardon.—Num. xii. 10. 2. Two sons of Aaron, for casting into their thuribles in haste other than sanctified fire, He struck suddenly dead in the sight of the whole people. —Levit. x. 2; Cornel. ib. 3. He commanded to be stoned to death a poor man that had gathered up a few sticks on the Sabbath day.—Num. xv. 35; Salian ib. Lastly, He took Moses out of this life, before he could enter the land of promise, which, notwithstanding he most earnestly desired; and this for some diffidence (as the holy fathers expound it) in striking the rock.—Deut. xxxii. 51. Compare these and the like examples with your actions, and you will find you have often deserved more.

Consider 2.—God hath ordained more severe punishment for venial sins, after death, in purgatory: "That purgatory fire (said Saint Augustine) will be more unsufferable than what pain soever can be seen, felt, or even understood in this life."—Aug. Ser. 41, de Sanctis. There all debts will be exacted to the last farthing; neither will there be place for any other satisfaction than by suffering.

"Which of you (saith Isaias) can dwell with devouring fire?"—Is. xxxiii. 14—such as will be there.

Consider 3.—Seeing you would not endure now to lie in flames, even for a quarter of an hour, although it were to gain the whole world, how reasonable were it to make satisfaction at present by penance for what is past, and to be wary for the future; and if through human frailty, you be not able to avoid all, avoid at least the greater, and diminish, as much as you can, the number; "that so, that purgatory fire (as St. Augustine speaketh) may find little or nothing in you to consume."—Aug. Sup.

THE REMEDIES AGAINST SIN.

The Memory of the last Things.

OF DEATH.—PART I.

How certain it is, and withal how uncertain.

CONSIDER 1.—Death is inevitable. "It is appointed unto men (saith the Apostle) once to die."—Heb. ix. 27. Nothing is more certain or evident to sense. All that have gone before us, princes, emperors, bishops, popes, have died at last; neither could any one hitherto, of what power or dignity soever, escape or put it off: "Thou hast appointed his bounds, which cannot be passed"—Job xiv. 5—saith Job. Wherefore thou also infallibly must once come to it.

Consider 2.—As for the time, place, and manner of death, nothing is more uncertain. How many sudden accidents have you heard, read, or even beheld with your own eyes? How many hath death unexpectedly stolen upon, while they were eating, sleeping, laughing, or playing? And when is your turn to be? What if at this instant?—would you be ready for it? Wherefore Christ often, and in the most impressive terms, inculcates that we should be ready at all hours. "Watch ye therefore (for you know not when the lord of the house cometh: at even, or at midnight, or at cock-crowing, or in the morning.)"—Mark xiii. 35.

Consider 3.—Death is but once to be undergone, and if it hath gone ill, there is no amends or recovery to be made;

if once ill, so it will ever be; if once well, it will be well for you for all eternity. "If the tree fall to the south (saith the wise man), or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall, there shall it be."—Eccles. xi. 3. Neither will there be any more time or place for penance. Procure, therefore, by living well, that whensoever your time cometh of falling, it be to the right side. See in what state you are at present, and whether there be anything in you which you would not wish on your death-bed; and think often with yourself, that to perish once is to be lost for ever.

OF DEATH.—PART II.

How terrible it is.

Consider 1.—The miserable state of a dying man, lying on his death-bed, given over by his physician, and hastening his last agony. Consider the many gifts and anguishes that surround him on every side. 1. From the memory of things past, for then will come to his mind the sins he hath committed, the loss of so much precious time spent in vanities, together with the neglect of many helps afforded him by Almighty God towards his salvation. Then perhaps, one hour's space of longer penance will be earnestly wished for, but not afforded him, who, while he was in health and vigour, neglected many. "He would not have blessing (saith David), and it shall be far from him."—Ps. cviii. 18. Oh! with what sighs will sinners at that hour cry out, and say, "What hath pride profited us? or what advantage hath the boasting of riches brought us?"—Wisd. v. 8.

Consider 2.—The grief of mind for leaving the present enjoyments of this life; for as St. Augustine saith, "That is not left without grief, which is possessed with delight."—Aug. Ser. de Inno. c. 3. Notwithstanding, at that hour are to be left all friends and kindred, pleasures, delights, and riches, without any hopes of ever more recovering them. "We brought nothing (saith the apostle) into this world: and certainly we can carry nothing out."—1 Tim. vi. 7. Whereupon Ecclesiasticus, "O death, how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that hath peace in his

possessions."—Ecclus. xli. 1. Cast off, therefore, in time, all affection to worldly things, that you may hereafter part without grief.

Consider 3.—The anguish and perplexity of mind proceeding from the uncertainty of things to come. The final sentence of everlasting doom draweth near. "Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred."—Eccles. ix. 1. The devil will be at hand to tempt, and cast you into despair. Think what you would then wish yourself to have done in your life-time, and do it now while you have opportunity.

OF DEATH.—PART III.

The Horror of the Corpse.

Consider 1.—What a thing that body is after death, which in our life-time we cherish, pamper and adorn with so much care. 1. It lieth destitute of all sense and motion, it seeth nothing, heareth nothing, neither can it so much as put off the worms that lie devouring it. 2. It looketh pale and deformed, and from the intolerable stench proceeding from the corruption that issueth out of it, striketh horror even into the dearest friends. Wherefore, with reason, Blessed Francis Borgia, having beheld the corpse of a famous Empress of his time, now rotting in her grave, is said to have cried out, "How long shall we love vanity, and seek after lying? how long neglecting solid truths, shall we hunt after shadows? all things moulder away with death, and from mirth soon pass into tears."—In vita Borg. l. i. c. 7. Psal. iv. 3.

Consider 2.—The garments, bed, and habitation of the dead body. It is stript of whatsoever ornaments it had; for its garments it is wrapt up in a winding sheet; for its bed, it is cast on the ground; for its habitation, it is confined to a pit seven feet long; and lastly, given over to the worms and serpents, to be torn and consumed by them. "When a man shall die (saith Ecclesiasticus) he shall inherit serpents, and beasts, and worms."—And Isaias, "Under thee shall the moth be strewed, and worms shall be thy covering."—Is. xiv. 11. O what a habitation! what companions.

Consider 3.—How profitable and necessary it is often to call to mind this last end of your body, lest you should have a greater care and love for that which is to be devoured by worms than for your soul that is to live for an eternity. From this forgetfulness of death proceed all our evils; wherefore, whensoever you see a dead corpse, or scull, imagine that of Ecclesiasticus to be spoken to you: "Remember my judgment; for thine also shall be so: yesterday for me, and to-day for thee."—Ecclus. xxxviii. 23. Wherefore, be ever preparing yourself, and live as one that is dying. For, "He will easily contemn all things, that always imagines himself a dying man."—St. Hieron. Corn. in Eccles. vii.

PREPARING AGAINST DEATH.

For those that are in Health.

Consider 1.—With what diligence men are wont to prepare themselves for a long voyage; for example to the Indies; and if they are but to cross the sea, how carefully do they watch the wind, and provide lest the time of embarking find them unprepared: we ought to be much more solicitous for our departure out of this life, whence we are to go into everlasting happiness or misery. Therefore Christ doth often inculcate to us: "Be ready; for at what hour you think not, the Son of Man will come"—Luke xii. 40; and the like.

Consider 2.—The preparation consisteth chiefly in this point, that the soul at her departure (whensoever it shall happen) be found free from all mortal, and, as much as may be, also from all venial sin; so that it may have no hindrance in going straight to heaven. Wherefore examine yourself; see whether you be conscious of anything that may stop your passage to heaven, if you were now to die, and put yourself in that state, which you would wish yourself to die in, and strive to persevere therein, for you may chance to die suddenly; and few become better in time of sickness. "The sinner (as St. Augustine saith) hath also this punishment inflicted upon him, that when he cometh to die, he is unmindful of himself, who, while he lived, was

unmindful of God."—Aug. 1. de gen. con. Man. c. 28. Wherefore while you are in health neglect not yourself.

Consider 3.—What things in particular usually cause much comfort to dying persons. Such are, to have suffered much for Christ, to have been given to the mortification of the flesh, and abnegation of self-will, to have been devout to the Blessed Virgin and the saints and the like. Wherefore apply yourself vigorously even now to these things. Happy was that holy man who could say on his death-bed, "I have never done my own will, neither have I taught any one what I have not first practised myself."—Cass. 1. v. c. 28.

PREPARING AGAINST DEATH.—PART II.

For the Sick.

Consider 1.—Sickness is usually the messenger of death. Therefore let a man foresee what may be expedient for him against the time of sickness, that he may make a more secure and happy end. Let him then, in the first place, acknowledge that sickness and pain are gifts of a most loving Father, and sent him either to take away the rust of sin, or for trial of his virtue and increase of glory, according to that saying, "Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee."—Tob. xii. 13. And therefore let him also give thanks, that by means of sickness he hath both warning and time to dispose himself for death.

Consider 2.—What the sick man is chiefly to do in order to dispose himself for death. 1. To cleanse himself of all sin by a good confession. 2. To offer himself to God, wholly resigned for life or death, as it shall best please Him. 3. To foresee such occasions, wherein he perhaps may come to suffer, either through the vexation of his sickness, or by carelessness of his attendants; and animate himself to suffer all with courage. 4. To procure good books to be often read to him. 5. Now and then to inflame himself with ejaculatory prayers. 6. Often to call to mind Christ's Passion. 7. Diligently to recommend himself to the Blessed Virgin, and the saints his patrons. 8. To make now and then acts of faith, hope, charity, contrition, and such other like.

Consider 3.—Danger increasing, he is timely to demand the last sacraments, that so he may receive them with greater devotion. Then let him dilate his heart towards the happy meeting of his spouse. "Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye forth to meet Him."—Matt. xxv. 6. Let him yield himself up wholly to his Lord God, saying with Christ, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit"—Luke xxiii. 46; or with David, "Bring forth my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy name."—Ps. cxli. 8.

THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT.—PART I.

Consider 1.—At the hour of death all men are to be judged, "That every one may receive the proper things of the body, according as he hath done, either good or evil." Ponder the terror of this judgment. First, in respect of the persons who are to be actors in it. He that is to judge, is infinitely wise, whom you cannot deceive; infinitely powerful, whom you cannot resist; infinitely just, who cannot be wrought to favour; and lastly, of supreme authority, from whom you cannot appeal. The devils will be at hand as accusers; and if we have deserved evil, even our own angel guardians; there also our own conscience will stand witness against us. Before all these the poor soul is to appear, without any attendance of servants, or support of friends, despoiled of whatsoever she had in this world, accompanied only with her own works: these alone, whether good or evil, will follow her to an everlasting reward or punishment: "For their works follow them."—Apoc. xiv. 13.

Consider 2.—The terror of this judgment in regard of the strict account. There will be made a process of our whole life; every action, though ever so much hidden and secret, will be brought to a most strict examination; "All things that are done, God will bring to judgment for every error, even every idle word."—Eccles. xii. 14; Matt. xii. 36. The severe Judge will exact an account not only of the evils committed, but also of the good neglected: He will also weigh the good actions themselves, and see whether they be full, and performed with due attention and exactness. "I" (saith He, by David,) "will judge justices."—Ps.

lxxiv. 3. And by Sophonias, "I will search Jerusalem with lamps"—Soph. i. 12; and if Jerusalem and the saints, how much more Babylon and sinners?

Consider 3.—And ask yourself this question: What shall I, miserable wretch, say for myself, at that time? For prevention, take the advice of Ecclesiasticus: "Before sickness take a medicine, and before judgment examine thyself, and thou shalt find mercy in the sight of God."—Ecclus. xviii. 20. While you have time, do good.

THE PARTICULAR JUDGMENT.—PART II.

Consider 1.—The miserable condition of a sinful soul, when at her trial she shall be found to come short in her accounts, and guilty of deadly sin; for then she is to be degraded, as priests are wont in disgrace and ignominy, having their sacred vestments taken from them, so to be delivered up to secular power. 1. Will be taken from her the gift of faith, for that she did not lead a life conformable to it. 2. Will be taken also from her the gift of hope, for having neglected the means afforded her for the attaining her chief good. 3. She shall be deprived of all supernatural favours and graces (if she had any), and of moral virtues, which she made not right use of. 4. Natural sciences shall remain for her greater punishment, for having preferred them before the knowledge of salvation. 5. The character of baptism shall also remain, and whatsoever other she had, for her greater ignominy, that it may appear from what she is fallen, and that she may be upbraided by the infidels reproaching her with that scoff, "This man began to build, and was not able to finish."—Luke xiv. 30. Finally, then will be fulfilled in her that of Ezechiel: "And they shall strip thee of thy garments, and shall take away the instruments of thy glory, etc., and shall let thee go naked, and full of disgrace."—Ezech. xxiii. 26, 29.

Consider 2.—The terror of the final sentence, that will be thundered out against the wicked: "Depart from Me, you cursed, into everlasting fire."—Matt. xxv. 41, etc. O what a plight and horror will the soul be in at that moment, the devils hurrying her presently away into everlasting torments! But no remedy then to avoid it. As yet you may, if you be wise.

Consider 3.—On the contrary, the happy condition of the just, that will be found innocent in that judgment. Unto such it will be said: "Because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."—Matt. xxv. 23. Think what a joy that will be. If you aspire to that lot, imitate that life.

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.—PART I.

Consider 1.—The causes of the General Judgment. 1. To manifest the glory and power of Christ, unto whom the "Father hath given all judgment, that all men may honour the Son," etc.—John v. 22, 23. And that He who came visibly to save all men, might also visibly and publicly come to judge all, that the wicked may see and behold whom they have crucified. 2. That the just might have justice and honour done them, and the wicked due punishment, and God justified in His judgment, who for the most part permitteth the just to be afflicted while they live, and the wicked to live in all prosperity. 3. That the bodies also may receive due reward or punishment, as they have been instruments of virtue or vice to the souls.

Consider 2.—The terror of the judgment by the foregoing signs. There shall be great earthquakes, and pestilences, and famine, and terrors from heaven.—Matt. xxiv. 7. The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall down from heaven, and the powers of heaven shall be moved.—Luke xxi. Or, as St. Peter saith, "The heavens being on fire shall be dissolved."—2 Pet. iii. 12. The sea shall roar in a horrid manner, the earth tremble, and be all on fire. "Behold the day shall come (saith Malachias), kindled as a furnace: and all the proud, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall set them on fire."—Malach. iv. 1. Take heed therefore you prove not stubble on that fiery day.

Consider 3.—The angel shall sound forth his dreadful trumpet, the dead shall arise and take their bodies; but with how different a countenance, the just from the wicked. How will these inveigh against their bodies, for whose sake and pleasure they committed so many sins in their life-

time? "They shall say to the mountains: Fall upon us; and to the hills: Cover us."—Luke xxiii. 30. But then there will be no means to escape. How much will it be wished for at that time, above all the crowns and sceptres of the world, to have lived in the grace of God! Think therefore often upon this: "Whether I eat or drink, or do anything else (saith St. Jerome), that dreadful voice doth sound in my ears, 'Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment.'" —Hieron. Reg. Mon. c. 30.

THE GENERAL JUDGMENT.—PART II.

Consider 1.—The terror of the judgment increased by the appearance of the Judge. "Then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with great power and majesty."—Luke xxi. 27. An innumerable company of angels shall stand about Him, ready to execute whatsoever He shall decree. "Then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all tribes of the earth mourn"—Matt. xxiv. 30,—to wit, the enemies of Christ's cross. A throne shall be set for the Judge in a bright cloud, and seats round about for the Blessed Virgin and the Apostles. From the Judge's countenance shall issue forth darts of love towards His friends, but of fire and indignation against the reprobate. "A swift stream of fire issued forth from before Him"—Dan. vii. 10—saith Daniel. Who would not wish then to have been a friend in his lifetime of so dreadful a Judge?

Consider 2.—"The angels shall go out, and shall separate the wicked from among the just."—Matt. xiii. 49. These shall be placed at the right hand of the Judge, as sheep; the other on the left, as goats, in contempt and ignominy. Ponder the untimely repentance of the wicked, especially when they shall see the just above them, whom sometime "they had in derision, and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed their life madness, etc. Behold, how they are numbered among the children of God."—Wisd. v. 3, etc. Then will be exacted a most strict account of every particular; and what perhaps you are now ashamed to disclose to your confessor, will then be known to the whole world. Be careful now to efface by penance, what you would not then have known to your shame and ignominy.

Consider 3.—The just sentence of the Judge. He will say to the saints, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you"—Matt. xxv. 34, etc.; to the wicked, "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire."—Matt. xxv. 41. Ponder the greatness both of the reward and of the punishment, and choose which you had rather; it is now put into your hands; afterwards it will not: wherefore while you have time, "Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly; for neither work, nor reason, nor wisdom, nor knowledge, shall be in hell, whither thou art hastening."—Eccles. ix. 10.

HELL.—PART I.

Consider 1.—Hell is the dungeon of the damned, full of all misery, and void of all good. Invent the cruelest pains and torments that you can imagine, they would all be but as a shadow compared to hell. The place itself shall be (as St. John saith), "A pool of fire burning with brimstone."—Apoc. xix. 20. Wherefore it will be—1. Hideously obscure, without light, even above Egyptian darkness. 2. Excessively strait for the infinite number of bodies, that will there be packed together. 3. Infinitely loathsome and disagreeable, by reason of the smoke, effluvia of brimstone, and filthiness of the bodies. 4. Ever shut up without any convenience of breathing, or air. 5. "Where (as Job saith) is the shadow of death, and no order, but everlasting horror dwelleth."—Job x. 22.

Consider 2.—The quality of the pains. 1. For being continual without intermission, for they "shall be tormented (as St. John saith), day and night for ever and ever."—Apoc. xx. 10. 2. For the grievousness of them, being most sharp and vehement, without any, the least, relaxation. Whence the rich glutton in the Gospel could not obtain so much as one drop of water to cool his tongue. 3. For the diversity and contrariety of them, which makes to their greater torment, expressed by that of Job: "Let him pass from the snow waters to excessive heat."—Job xxiv. 19. 4. For the company or society, which will be with the devils and cursed souls that are obdurated in the hatred of God; and with serpents, vipers, and dragons. "He shall suck the head of asps, and the

viper's tongue shall kill him, etc. He shall be punished for all that he did, and yet shall not be consumed."—Job xx. 16, 18.

Consider 3.—The everlasting durance of all this, which after millions of years shall begin afresh as if nothing had ever been, and shall last for ever. Because 1. The soul is immortal. "They shall seek death and shall not find it." Apoc. ix. 6. 2. The place never to be destroyed. 3. The fire unquenchable.—Mark ix. 43. 4. Their sin by obstinacy irrevocable, and consequently "their worm dieth not."—Mark ix. 47. Lastly, God's decree is unchangeable, because in hell there is no redemption.

HELL.—PART II.

Consider 1.—That saying of the wise man, "By what things a man sinneth, by the same also he is tormented."—Wisd. xi. 17. And because we offend God by all the senses of the body, therefore the damned in hell shall be tormented in them all. 1. The sight shall be tormented with hideous shapes of the devils, horrid representations of sins past, and with the view of their cursed company, which it will detest with mortal hatred. 2. The hearing, with continual blasphemies, gnashing of teeth, curses and howlings. 3. The smell, with brimstone, pitch, and intolerable stench of the bodies. 4. The taste, with ravenous hunger, unquenchable thirst, and insufferable bitterness of the fiery brimstone. 5. The sense of feeling, with most sharp torments all over the body, for the sinner shall be (as the Prophet saith), as stubble to the fire.—Malac. iv. 1. Which of you (saith another), can dwell with devouring fire? "Which of you shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"—Isa. xxxiii. 14. Imagine the same in proportion, of the understanding, memory, will, and other powers.

Consider 2.—Heavier than all this will be the pain of loss, as the divines call it, for that the greater the good is that is lost, the greater likewise is the grief it causeth. And the damned, to their greater torment, shall know the greatness of the happiness, which they have forfeited by sin. This happiness is God Himself, and the clear sight and enjoyment of Him; the blessed company of saints, perpetual tranquillity and peace, peaceful delight, delightful satiety,

and the like. And yet we can find in our hearts to let all this go, and besides incur everlasting torments for some short and trifling pleasure.

Consider 3.—What you are to do to escape hell. You must use all your endeavour to avoid sin, which leadeth thither. And if you would not for the whole world lie broiling on a gridiron even for an hour, how much more ought you to be averse to sin. "Let us, therefore, bewail our sins (as a certain holy man said), before we come thither, where our tears will serve for nothing but to scorch and burn our bodies."

PURGATORY.—PART I.

Consider 1.—As hell is ordained for punishment of mortal sin, so is purgatory for venial. And here likewise sinners suffer for a time pain both of sense and loss. Ponder therefore the grievousness of the pains of sense. 1. With respect to the place, which is also under ground, dark and contiguous to hell. 2. For the nature and condition of fire, which is of the same kind and activity (as divines teach) with that of hell. 3. For the excess of torment; for (as St. Augustine saith), "That purging fire is more grievous than what pain soever we can see, feel, or even imagine in this world."—Aug. Ser. 41, de Sanctis. For the long durance; for although those torments be not everlasting, yet to very many they last for many years, and to some even till the day of judgment; as appeareth by divers very credible and authentic histories. "Which of you can dwell with devouring fire?"—Isa. xxxiii. 14.

Consider 2.—The pain of loss which the souls sustain here for the delay of the beatific vision, which they most ardently long for. "Hope that is deferred afflicteth the soul"—Prov. xiii. 12:—much more the hopes of so great a happiness as is the seeing and enjoying of God. Think if you were promised a kingdom, what a longing condition you would be in, till you were in possession; with much greater desire are the souls there inflamed, and they grieve the more, that so great a good is deferred for their own carelessness and negligence in this life.

Consider 3.—How much it imports you both to shun, to the utmost of your power, venial sins; and withal to satisfy

fully for mortal sins, though confessed and forgiven, lest you come to be cast in this purging fire; for (as St. Augustine, above cited, saith) "He that will not now put so much as one finger into the fire, must necessarily dread to be tormented then, whole body and soul, though but for a short time."—Aug. Sup.

PURGATORY.—PART II.

Consider 1.—For how light causes, as we read in histories, many have been sent to purgatory; some for not bowing their heads in the choir at *Gloria Patri;* others for desiring too earnestly holy orders; some again for vanity in arguing; others for curiosity in apparel; St. Severin himself, at whose sepulchre miracles were wrought, for not reciting the Divine Office in due time; and Paschiasias, deacon, for some inordinate affection in the election of the Pope, and that through error and ignorance (as St. Gregory witnesseth).—Greg. lib. 4. Dial. c. 40. Compare now these small defects with your own, and you will find that you have deserved a much heavier judgment. Wherefore humbly ask pardon, and say with the Psalmist: "O Lord, rebuke me not in Thy indignation, nor chastise me in Thy wrath. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak."—Ps. vi. 1, 2.

Consider 2.—Our merciful Lord hath afforded us many means to satisfy for our sins in this life, and to escape purgatory. These are, receiving the sacraments, offering the divine sacrifice; indulgences, fasting, alms, prayers, tears, chastising the body, patient suffering of hunger and thirst, sickness, and the like. God is content with a little in this life, and is soon appeased by means of our poor services; but in the other life He will severely exact the whole debt of punishment, even "to the last farthing."—Matt. v. 26. Wherefore, while you have time, do good. "Defraud not thyself of the good day (as Ecclesiasticus admonisheth), and let not the part of a good gift overpass thee."—Ecclus. xiv. 14.

Consider 3.—Among other means, one of the most efficacious to escape, or at least to mitigate, our pains in purgatory, is to pray much for the dead while we live; for our merciful Lord permitteth that afterwards we receive

the same measure that we used to others here. And "the merciful (as He saith Himself) shall obtain mercy."—Matt. v. 7.

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as Judge.

"Behold the Lord cometh with thousands of His saints to execute judgment."—Jude, 14; Luke xxi. 25.

CONSIDER 1.—What is read this day in the gospel, that Christ is to be the universal Judge of all men, whose judgment we ought greatly to stand in fear of. 1. By reason of His supreme authority, from whom none can appeal. 2. For the rigour of His justice, which no entreaties nor bribes will be able to corrupt. 3. For his infinite wisdom, from which nothing can be concealed. 4. For that He will be not only judge, but also the plaintiff or party offended.

Consider 2.—What a favour it would be if the judge himself should in a friendly manner, come to some criminal in prison and teach him how he may escape, and come off with security of life in his trial. The same will Christ do to you this day. Wherefore receive Him at His coming with great love and gratitude; and now, while you may, endeavour by earnest prayers to gain Him, against that dreadful day, when there will be no more place for prayers.

Consider 3.—Hence you must have a great care, that there be nothing in your soul that may displease the eyes of your Judge when He cometh. He will search the inmost recesses of your heart. Cleanse, therefore, diligently all things against His coming. Say humbly with the prophet, "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, O Lord"—Psal. cxlii. 2;—but rather in the bowels of Thy mercy visit us now, "O Orient arising from on high," etc.—Eccl. in Off. Wherefore Boetius saith well in these words: "We have a great necessity of living well, seeing we do all

things before the eyes of the Judge that seeth all." Think well on this, and "before judgment prepare for the judge." —Boeth. apud S. Tho. Opusc. de Sacr. c. 2.

MONDAY.

IMITATING THE LIFE OF CHRIST OUR LORD.—PART I.

Consider 1.—For two reasons Christ our Lord came from the bosom of His Eternal Father into the world, as the holy Fathers everywhere teach—1. To redeem us from sin. 2. To give us an example of living, by His own manner of life. His life, therefore, ought to be the model and mirror of ours: to the end that squaring our actions conformably to His, we may come by His steps to arrive at last also to His glory.

Consider 2.—How glorious a thing it is to follow such an example. "It is great glory (saith Ecclesiasticus) to follow the Lord."—Ecclus. xxiii. 38. By following men, whosoever they are, you may err; because they are men apt both to be deceived themselves and to deceive others. By following Christ you cannot err, because He is the way; you cannot be deceived, because He is the truth; you cannot perish, because He is the life. "The way in example (saith St. Bernard), the truth in promise, the life in reward."—Bern. Ser. 2. de Ascen. Lastly, He commandeth nothing which He doth not first do Himself. So that He may say with Gideon, "What you shall see me do, do you."—Judges vii. 17.

Consider 3.—How foolishly you have hitherto done, in directing your actions by any other rule than the life of Christ. All other rules are crooked and naught, and the wisdom of this world (according to which, perchance you govern yourself) is foolishness with God.—1 Cor. iii. 19. Ask pardon for this folly, and beseech our Lord to accept of you, and admit you into the number of His followers.

TUESDAY.

IMITATING THE LIFE OF CHRIST.—PART II.

Consider 1.—The followers of Christ are of three different sorts: some by name only and exteriorly; they say they

are Christians and know Christ, "but in their works they deny Him."—Tit. i. 16. They defile themselves with continual sins, and in their works crucify Christ anew. These are but equivocally termed Christians; for indeed they follow not Christ but the devil. Think how often you have been such. Repent and take heed for the future.

Consider 2.—Others there are who indeed follow Christ, but afar off, as St. Peter did when Christ was apprehended; who, perhaps for that cause, as some observe, came to fall and deny his Master; for, any example or pattern, that it may have influence, must be duly applied, and at a right distance. So, many follow Christ, but coldly; they purpose to keep the commandments, but care not to extend themselves (with the apostle) to things of greater perfection. When it is said to such as these: "Go sell what thou hast," etc., "and come, follow Me," they "go away sad"—Matt. xix. 21, 22,—like the young man in the gospel. See whether you be one of these.

Consider 3.—Others, finally, there are, who, with a generous resolution, strive to follow Christ even to the cross. "By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report"—2 Cor. vi. 9;—and with the apostle, "count all things as dung, that they may gain Christ."—Phil. iii. 8. Lastly, they endeavour to conform themselves in all things to the model of His life. See among whom you choose to rank yourself; and know that in what proportion you are like unto Christ in this life, you will also be hereafter in glory.

WEDNESDAY.

THE DIVINE DECREE CONCERNING CHRIST'S INCARNATION. PART I.

Consider 1.—The state which the whole world was in. Some of the angels had fallen; all mankind had also sinned. The wicked angels leaving the blessed in heaven, were cast into hell. Mankind lived in banishment out of paradise, shut out of heaven, made slaves of the devil and enemies to God, and lay wallowing from one sin into another, to be cast at length headlong into hell-fire; neither did there appear any means possible of appeasing the divine justice, as no mere creature could make any satisfaction.

Consider 2.—The three Divine Persons in heaven, through commiseration, consulting about a remedy. See how the Second Person, as no satisfaction could be otherwise made to the Divine justice, freely offered Himself to His Eternal Father, saying those words of David: "Sacrifice and oblation Thou didst not desire," etc. "Then, said I, Behold I come."—Psal. xxxix. 7, 8. Admire in the Son this voluntary oblation of Himself; admire in the Father His most gracious acceptance. O inestimable effect of charity! To redeem His slaves, He refused not to deliver up His only Son. Give thanks to both, with the Holy Ghost, and offer what you are able in gratitude.

Consider 3.—What would have become of you, had not Christ thus interposed Himself. You would have lain for ever in the filth of sin, destined, according to your deserts, to the flames of hell. So that you may, with all truth say, "Unless the Lord had been my helper, my soul had almost dwelt in hell."—Psal. xciii. 17. Learn hence to esteem the greatness of the benefit; and seeing God hath thus bestowed Himself upon you, give yourself up wholly to Him, and say, "My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready!"—Psal. cvii. 2.

THURSDAY.

THE DIVINE DECREE CONCERNING CHRIST'S INCARNATION. PART II.

Consider 1.—The admirable perfections of God, manifested in this decree. And first, His infinite wisdom, whereby He would cure our maladies by their contraries. Man sinned through pride, vainly coveting a likeness with God. "You shall be as gods."—Gen. iii. 5. God would remedy this evil by "emptying Himself, taking the form of a servant, and made in the likeness of men."—Phil. ii. 7. Detest pride, which hath brought so much evil into the world, and imitate the example of humility which Christ hath given you.

Consider 2.—His unspeakable charity. "God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son"—John iii. 16—even the Son Himself so loved it, as to give Himself for it. But who? and for whom? The God of majesty, for a most vile and ungrateful slave. Love, therefore, so loving

a Lord, with your whole heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength; and seeing you cannot sufficiently love Him, endeavour, according to your state and calling, to draw as many as you can into your company, in the joint love and service of Him.

Consider 3.—His infinite goodness in communicating Himself to man, in the highest degree possible; His mercy, whereby He would take upon Him our miseries, to relieve us; His justice, which, that He might satisfy to the utmost rigour, He made our whole debt His own. Lastly, His power in joining two extremes of infinite distance from one another, God and man—Creator and creature. O admirable conjunction! "Sing ye to the Lord a new canticle, because He hath done wonderful things. The Lord hath made known His salvation, He hath revealed His justice in the sight of the Gentiles."—Psal. xcvii. 1, 2.

FRIDAY.

THE ELECTION OF THE MOTHER TO THE WORD INCARNATE. PART I.

Consider 1.—The Incarnation being decreed as to the substance, the Eternal Word might have taken the perfect body of a man, such as He framed for Adam, without infringing the rigour of justice, which He desired to satisfy. Notwithstanding, He chose to be born of a mother. 1. So to honour both sexes: man, in his own person; woman, by taking flesh and blood of her. 2. That in her we might also have a mother and advocatrix to her Son, our Judge. 3. That being thus made a helpless infant, and subject to His mother, He might give us an example of humility and subjection. Reflect how in all things He chooseth the worst, and most repugnant to sense. See, and imitate.

Consider 2.—How the Word made choice of this individual mother, not for any merit of hers, which then were none at all, but to the end she might have merits. Therefore He bestowed upon her the fulness of grace and virtue; that so she might be made fit to be the mother of God. Congratulate with her for this her election and predestination from all eternity. "I was set up from eternity, and of old before the earth was made."—Prov. viii. 23. Offer

yourself to be her client for ever, and with all earnestness implore her aid and protection.

Consider 3.—The Eternal Word would not have for His mother any rich personage or princess, but one that was poor and of mean condition in the world, thereby to confound our pride and vanity, that seek and hunt greedily after such things as made a show and noise in the world. "Ye sons of men, how long will you be dull of heart? Why do you love vanity, and seek after lying"—Ps. iv. 3. Learn to contemn the judgments of the world, and to esteem those things only great, as are such in the sight of God; and know that much worth and virtue often lieth under a contemptible disguise.

SATURDAY.

THE ELECTION OF THE MOTHER TO THE WORD INCARNATE. PART II.

And of her Prerogatives.

Consider 1.—It was fitting that the Eternal Word should honour His mother, and raise her above the common condition of mortals by special privileges. "King Solomon made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the finest gold," etc. There "was no such work made in any kingdom."—3 Kings x. 18, 20. How much more fitting was it that the King of heaven should adorn His throne, where He was to abide for nine months together?

Consider 2.—Several of her privileges. 1. Sanctity, and that the greatest of any pure creature, communicated unto her from the first moment of her conception; for it was not fit that the mother of God should ever, even for one single moment, be under the slavery of the devil. 2. Suppression of concupiscence. 3. Confirmation in grace, so as never to forfeit it by mortal sin, or even to suffer the least diminution of its fervour by venial. 4. Continual progress in the same, by heroic acts of virtue, whereby it was increased to an infinite proportion. 5. The use of reason from the first moment. 6. To conceive and remain a virgin. 7. To be in child-birth without pain. 8. To be a mother, and delivered of her Son, without detriment to her virginal integrity. 9. To be a mart, a sea, an ocean of all

manner of grace, so as to surpass the perfections of all the saints together.

Consider 3.—Her admirable titles, in being after an especial manner, daughter to the Eternal Father, mother to the only begotten Son, spouse to the Holy Ghost, and sovereign queen of men and angels. She is also styled the mother of mercy, the advocatrix of mankind, and refuge of sinners. Think what a refuge and protection you have in such a mother. Commend yourself earnestly to her. "for such is His will, who will have us have all by Mary."—St. Bern.

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

HOLY COMNUNION.

Consider Christ as the Expectation of the Gentiles.

"I will look towards the Lord; I will wait for God my Saviour.' Mich. vii. 7.

CONSIDER 1.—What is said to-day in the gospel: "Art Thou He that art to come, or look we for another?"—Matt. xi. 3. Christ is the Expectation of the nations, as is said in Aggeus: "And the Desired of all nations shall come"—Agg. ii. 8; and with good reason, for He was to bring light to them that sat in darkness and the shadow of death, sight to the blind, going to the lame, hearing to the deaf, as we have in this day's gospel, and finally salvation to all. For "He shall save His people from their sins."—Matt. i. 21.

Consider 2.—This same Messias, and Expectation of the Gentiles, will come unto you this day in the Eucharist, to save you, to free you from your iniquities, to cure your infirmities, and to heap upon you the gifts of His grace and virtues. Oh! what a benefit is this. "Behold, God is my Saviour (saith Isaias), I will do confidently, and will not fear." Do you also confidently, disclosing and giving yourself up wholly unto Him.

Consider 3.—Against His coming you must exercise yourself beforehand, in fervent desires and many longing sighs after Him; for therefore He is called "the Expectation of the Gentiles," and the "Desire of the eternal hills"—Gen.

xlix. 10, 26—that is, of the holy patriarchs and prophets. Hence David, "With expectation I have waited for the Lord; and He was attentive to me."—Psal. xxxix. 1. Expect Him, therefore, with an ardent desire; prepare and cleanse the lodging of your soul, lest otherwise being defiled and polluted with sin, you offend His pure eyes, and bring upon yourself a curse instead of a blessing.—Gen. xxvii. 12.

MONDAY.

THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

And first, of sending the Angel.

"The angel was sent from God into a city of Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin," etc.—Luke i. 26. Consider 1.—What an embassage this is. Never was there in the world anything so solemn. He that sendeth is the God of majesty, the most holy and divine Trinity. The messenger is Gabriel the archangel, which is as much as to say fortitude or strength; to signify that what message He brought, though it might seem ever so difficult or impossible, must be fulfilled. See how promptly He taketh and executeth the charge imposed upon Him; and imitate in like occasions.

Consider 2.—To whom he is sent. What man, if he had seen such an ambassador despatched immediately from God Himself, coming down from heaven into this lower world, would not have thought him sent to some great monarch? And yet he is sent to a city of no account, "Can anything of good come from Nazareth?"—John i. 46,—to a little cottage, and to a poor virgin espoused to a carpenter. Be ashamed that you should so miserably love and seek after such things as appear great and spacious in the sight of the world. Correct this affection in yourself, and know that you are in a gross error.

Consider 3.—The substance of the embassy was to require the Virgin's consent to be mother of God. God hath a right to exact any thing of His creature, yet He will have our duties towards Him to be voluntary. "He that created you without you (saith St. Augustine), will not save you without you." Oh! how often doth God send

unto you, by invisible angels, His holy inspirations, to gain your good will, that He may be conceived spiritually in your heart, and you refuse Him? Ask pardon, and "to-day if you shall hear His voice, harden not your heart."—Psal. xciv. 8.

TUESDAY.

THE ANGEL'S SALUTATION.

"And the Angel being come in," etc.—Luke i. 28, etc.

Consider 1.—The grave comportment of the angel, the modesty of His countenance, and His reference towards the virgin; and learn to carry yourself like an angel in your conversation with men, but much more with God, in prayer. "Hail, full of grace," by excellency, and above all other pure creatures. Think what you are full of, whether of grace and virtue, or not rather of pride, vanity, self-love, etc. "Our Lord is with thee," by a special presence, and the effects of His grace; and she again with Him, in her thoughts, desires, and affections. O what a happy communication! Examine your actions and affections, and see how much or little they are with God.

Consider 2.—The person of the Virgin; what she did, and what she thought at that time; she was alone praying in her chamber (as the holy fathers teach), that you might learn to entertain yourself with God, and in solitude, if you desire to be visited by Him. "She was troubled at his saying," to wit, at her own praises which the angel uttered, and which, whosoever is truly humble, refuseth, as not belonging to him, but to God alone. "She thought what manner of salutation this should be," most prudently examining every thing with herself, lest she might be deluded. O that Eve had so carefully weighed the serpent's words.

Consider 3.—How different are your proceedings, who, perhaps, on every occasion seek your own praises, and applaud yourself when you hear them spoken of by others; and not content to be condemned by other men's mouths, you do it by your own. When you hear such things as are pleasing to sense, you think not with yourself, "What manner of proposition this should be," but you presently

set your heart upon it, and seek to obtain. Wherefore first prudently sound the bottom of the water, or whatsoever affair, before you enter upon it, as the wise man adviseth, "Let thine eye-lids go before thy steps."

WEDNESDAY.

THE DELIVERY OF THE MESSAGE.

"Fear not, Mary," etc. "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb," etc.—Luke i. 30, etc. Consider 1.—How the angel taketh away all fear from the virgin: it being the property of a good spirit to bring peace and security to the soul. "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God;" for true joy and security is only to be found in the grace of God, not in the pleasures of the world, wherein, perhaps, you seek it most. This grace the Virgin found above all other creatures; so that it may be said of her what was said of Esther: "The king loved her more than all the women, and she had favour and kindness before him above all the women."—Esth. ii. 17.

Consider 2.—The message he cometh to bring. "Thou shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus," that is, Saviour. "He shall be great," by nature, as being God; by office, for He is to be Mediator between God and man; in gifts, for "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead corporally."—Colos. ii. 9. "He shall be the Son (not adoptive, as all the just are, but natural), of the Most High. He shall have the seat of David His father," but in a more eminent degree: "and He shall reign in the house of Jacob," that is, in the Church of the faithful, "for ever." Rejoice for the happy news of your Saviour, and congratulate with the mother for the greatness of her Son.

Consider 3—With St. Bernard these words, "He shall reign in the house of Jacob." And see that you be a Jacob; supplicate, and cast the devil out of your heart; wrestle with your own vicious inclinations and concupiscences; "Let not sin reign in your mortal body"—Rom. vi. 12—that our Lord Jesus may reign in the house of your soul, and that for ever. Say with the same St. Bernard, "I have no other king than my Lord Jesus."

THURSDAY.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN'S REPLY.

"How shall this be done?" etc.—Consider 1.—How the Blessed Virgin, who had hitherto been silent, began at last to speak in defence of her virginity, which she would not forfeit to be mother of God. O admirable purity! In this virtue she was truly singular, and without example. Learn hence: 1. Both to speak, and to be silent, in their due times and circumstances. 2. Not to be taken off from your good purposes and obligations, upon any account, without examining well how it may be done. 3. To be cautious and nice in point of chastity, and not to cast yourself in danger, under pretence of what good soever, knowing that "we have this treasure (of chastity) in earthen vessels."—2 Cor. iv. 7.

Consider 2.—"The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee." Ponder the excellency of virginity, whereof our Lord was so great a lover, that whereas He took upon Him all our other miseries, yet He would not be conceived but of a virgin; and in favour of her love also to the same, the Divine Spirit of Purity itself wrought in her this mysterious conception; whereby her Son, who as God proceeded wholly from His Father, as man became entirely hers, receiving from her alone what other children take from both parents. Beseech our Lord to come also upon you by His holy grace, and with His shoulders to overshadow you—Ps. xc. 4,—especially in "the day of battle"—Ps. cxxxix. 8,—against the heat of concupiscence and vicious appetites.

Consider 3.—"Behold thy cousin Elizabeth," etc. She who was barren becometh fruitful, that you should know there is nothing impossible to God. Therefore, although you have hitherto been fruitless of good works, yet by the divine grace and your own concurrence, you may come to be father of many, and that not only in yourself, but also in your neighbour, according to the condition and calling you are in. Therefore even now begin to co-operate with God's grace; for He will not be wanting, "who maketh a

barren woman to dwell in a house, the joyful mother of children."—Ps. cxii. 9.

FRIDAY.

THE VIRGIN'S CONSENT.

Consider 1.—How earnestly the angel and the whole court of heaven expected the Virgin's consent. "O Lady," saith St. Bernard, "speak the word which heaven and earth, and the lower world expect from you." At length she giveth her consent. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." Admire her singular humility, who being saluted Mother of God, would still keep the name of handmaid. This is that humility which our Lord regarded, as she saith in her Canticle, "Magnificat," and loved so much in her; put on the same humility in your life and actions, if you desire the Holy Ghost should dwell in you: for "He sendeth forth springs in the vales."—Ps. ciii. 10. He watereth the humble with the fountains of His grace, but leaveth the mountains, that is, the high and proud ones, dry.

Consider 2.—The name of handmaid, or slave, though it be contemptible among men, yet in relation to God is honourable; for we are truly His, by the several titles of creation, conservation, and redemption: to Him alone we ought to labour, and to direct all things to His glory, as did this blessed handmaid of His. Offer yourself, therefore, to God as a perpetual bond-slave; and say with the Psalmist: "O Lord, for I am Thy servant; I am Thy servant, and the son of Thy handmaid"—Ps. cxv. 16,—the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Consider 3.—The admirable obedience and resignation of the Blessed Virgin in conforming her will to God's divine pleasure. "Be it done to me according to Thy word," etc. Think how grateful this answer was to God, to men, and angels. Imitate her in resigning your will wholly into the hands of God, and say in everything, "Be it done to me (O Lord) according to Thy word," not to my will. And "not as I will, but as Thou."—Matt. xxvi. 39. Think how joyful the angel was for having obtained her consent, and for the happy success of his embassy, and how he returned

without delay into heaven, full of admiration of the mystery of the Incarnation, and of the virtues and excellencies of the Virgin.

SATURDAY.

THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE INCARNATION.

Consider 1.—How the Blessed Virgin having given her consent, immediately the Eternal Word, "As a bridegroom coming out of his bride-chamber," to celebrate his nuptials with human nature, "rejoiced as a giant to run the way" —Ps. xviii. 6, 7,—to unite unto Himself our flesh, and to begin the work of redemption. Whence having presently framed a perfect body out of the most pure blood of the Blessed Virgin, and created a rational soul, He vouchsafed to unite His divinity to them both. And thus, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us"—John i. 14;—think with what joy of the angels in heaven, and of the saints in Limbo, of God Himself, and particularly of the Blessed Virgin, now Mother of God.

Consider 2.—What manner of body the Eternal Word took upon Him in the Virgin's womb. He might have assumed an immortal one, and a glorious body had been but His due, in regard to the beatifical vision. But He took upon Him mortal flesh, and that of a little infant. 1. That He might "in all things be like unto His brethren." —Heb. ii. 17. 2. To oblige us to love Him the more tenderly. 3. To take from us all fear, and make us come with confidence unto Him. 4. To give us example of humility, patience, and mortification, in enduring nine months' imprisonment in His mother's womb. And 5. That He might, as the criminal, pay in His flesh what were not His, but our debts. Humble yourself, you that are dust, while you see the Lord of Majesty thus reduced in a manner to nothing, for your sake.

Consider 3.—What the Divine Infant did in the first instant of His conception, how He offered Himself, and His whole life and actions to His Eternal Father, as a holocaust, and sacrifice for our sins, saying, "Behold, I come," —Ps. xxxix. 8,—and how the Eternal Father was pleased in this His new-born Son, saying, "Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee."—Ps. ii. 7. To-day the heavens

did truly flow with honey, while true peace descended upon the earth. "Mercy and truth have met each other; justice and peace have kissed; truth is sprung out of the earth, and justice hath looked down from heaven."—Ps. lxxxiv. 11, etc.

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the anointed of our Lord.

"Draw me, we will run after Thee to the odour of Thy ointments."—*Cant.* i. 3.

CONSIDER 1.—What is read to-day in the Gospel, how the Pharisees sent to St. John—John i. 19,—to demand whether he were Christ; whereas this name agreeth with none but our Lord Jesus, who properly is Christ, or the anointed of our Lord; and that by a triple unction, as King, as Prophet, as High Priest. "Thy name is as oil poured out"—Cant. i. 2,—saith the Spouse. And David, "Thy God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows."—Ps. xliv. 8. Wherever He goeth, He carrieth with Him a most sweet odour of virtues. And who would not run in the odour of His precious ointments?

Consider 2.—This same anointed of our Lord will come to-day unto you, in the Eucharist, to make you partaker of His sweet ointment; for, "myrrh, and stacte, and cassia, perfume Thy garments"—Ps. xliv. 9,—that is, from the sacramental forms which cover Him as garments; hence He will anoint you with a threefold unction. 1. With the unction of mercy, blotting out your sins. 2. With the unction of fortitude, strengthening you against your spiritual conflicts. 3. With the unction of wisdom, instructing and enlightening your understanding. For "His unction teacheth you (saith St. John, I. ii. 27) all things."

Consider 3.—You must prepare yourself for Christ's coming. "I have prepared," saith David, "a lamp for my anointed"—Ps. cxxxi. 17,—which the holy doctors expound of John Baptist, for "He was a burning and a shining

light."—John v. 35. Prepare also in the same manner the lamp of your soul, cleansing it from the filth of sin, and giving it brightness and lustre — proceeding from good works that you may burn inwardly with love, and shine forth to others by example.

MONDAY.

THE VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

And first of her journey to Elizabeth.—Luke i. 39.

Consider 1.—The Word Incarnate, as soon as He was conceived, hastened to sanctify His precursor, that He might presently begin the office of a Saviour. He could have done this where He was, and at that distance; but He inspired His mother to go to Elizabeth's house, that she who was to be a mediatrix between us and her Son, might in some sort concur to the first sanctification which He wrought. And she, now full of God, readily followeth the divine impulse, and willingly embraceth the occasion of doing a good office. Learn of both to be zealous in helping others, and not to let slip any occasion of exercising charity.

"And Mary, rising up, went into the hill country with haste." Consider the promptness of her obedience to the divine inspirations; neither the difficulties nor dangers of a long journey, nor her own tenderness, nor the quality of being now mother of God, could take her off, but she presently puts herself upon the way. This sudden departure of hers was not through vain compliment or ceremony, nor of curiosity, nor of doubt in what the angel had assured her, but through pure zeal of pleasing God, and helping her neighbour. Observe her singular modesty, recollection, and devotion, wherewith she entertaineth the Son of God, whom she carrieth in her womb; and learn hence how to demean yourself, while you yet carry within your breast the same Son of God in the sacrament.

Consider 3.—It is proper for them that are full of the Divine Spirit, to tend towards the mount of perfection, to despise the world, and to aspire to things above, and to heaven itself. "Save thyself in the mountain"—Gen. xix.

17,—said the angel to Lot. Besides, they do it with speed and fervour; for (as St. Ambrose saith) "the grace of the Holy Ghost knoweth no lingering delays." See, whether, in your thoughts and desires, you do not cleave to these inferior things, and whether you do not go slowly and coldly on towards the mount of perfection.

TUESDAY.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN'S ENTRANCE INTO THE HOUSE OF ELIZABETH.—Luke i. 44.

Consider 1.—Mary, being entered into the house of Elizabeth, saluted first, though greater in dignity. So it becometh every one to prevent each other in civility and charity. Think with what modesty, and in what terms she delivered herself, happily in those words, "Hail, our Lord with thee." They passed no empty compliments, nor worldly ceremonies between them, but hearty expressions of mutual joy. At the voice of Mary, the Eternal Word sanctified His precursor, cleansed him from original sin, enriched him with the gifts of grace and sanctity, bestowed upon him the use of reason, and makes him sensible, even then, of the mystery of the Incarnation, and of his own happiness. "As soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy."

Consider 2.—How Elizabeth at the voice of Mary "was replenished with the Holy Ghost," endowed with the gifts of prophecy, "and cried out with a loud voice and said: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." Learn hence how beneficial is the meditation of the Blessed Virgin, by whose means the Eternal Word wrought such admirable effects in the Infant and His mother, and that we all partake of the fulness of Mary's grace and blessings. Salute her with the spirit of Elizabeth, acknowledge and extol her excellency, proceeding from the divine fruit of her womb. For, "By their fruits you shall know them."—Matt. vii. 16.

Consider 3.—Those other words of Elizabeth: "Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" Humility doth ever company the Divine Spirit and His gifts. Observe how by divine inspiration she styleth

her Mother of God, which the holy Church acknowledgeth as her chief title. Happily as St. John might use the like expressions towards his Sanctifier, and like affections pass between the infants from womb to womb, as did between the two mothers. Learn from the infant and His mother, how to entertain your Lord, when He cometh to you in the blessed sacrament.

WEDNESDAY.

THE CANTICLE "MAGNIFICAT," ETC.

Consider 1.—Elizabeth having uttered these great praises, the Blessed Virgin brake forth into that admirable canticle *Magnificat.* Observe how she returneth not the like compliment, as is the fashion of the world, nor yet through a dissembling pretence of humility doth she deny them, as most do on the like occasions; but ascribeth all to God, nothing to herself. Learn hence, that it is not the virtue of humility to deny, or dissemble the natural or supernatural gifts we have. But, 1. To acknowledge them as proceeding from the mere goodness of God, not from ourselves, or our own deserts. 2. To give God all the praise and honour, usurping nothing thereof to ourselves.

Consider 2.—Two principal lessons we are taught in this canticle. First, to rejoice and delight in God alone, and in things appertaining to our salvation, not in the vanities and pleasures, nor in the praises and favour of the world; for it is God alone, who hath "done great things" to the Blessed Virgin, and daily doth to His Church. He alone is powerful, He alone holy, "extending His mercy from generation to generation to them that fear Him," not to them that contemn and provoke Him by their sins. Examine wherein you are wont to be most delighted, and see you be not one of those that "rejoice in most wicked things."—Prov. ii. 14.

Consider 3.—The other lesson, which is the admirable virtue and efficacy of humility; and this, 1. In the person of the Blessed Virgin, in whom it was the foundation or cause of all her blessings. "Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid, for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." 2. In relation to all in general. "He hath put down the mighty from their

seat, and hath exalted the humble; He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent away empty." Wherefore, if you would be looked upon, and favoured by God, if you desire to be exalted, if you wish to be replenished with heavenly gifts, purchase humility; "love to be unknown and not regarded."

THURSDAY.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN'S STAY WITH ELIZABETH.

Consider 1.—The Blessed Virgin being led by Elizabeth into the inner rooms, saluted Zachary, who, no doubt, received special comfort, and singular favours at the presence of the divine Infant and His mother. Yet he, who at His mother's first salutation, made the other infant to leap for joy, would not, at this other, restore speech unto the father. This was a favour reserved for the honour of His precursor, at his birth. Learn hence to reverence the Divine Providence in the dispensing of His favours, and not to prescribe to God the time or manner of affording His succour, but patiently to expect with Zachary His divine pleasure.

Consider 2.—The Virgin remained in the house of Zachary about the space of three months, conversing with them with all humility and charity, assisting and serving them in what she could, even in the meanest domestic offices. Think how holy was the conversation of that blessed company, what fervent discourses, and always of God; how greatly Elizabeth and others profited by the company of Mary. For, "If at the first entrance (saith St. Ambrose), so great was the profit, that, at Mary's salutation, the infant leaped, and his mother was replenished with the Holy Ghost, what do we think Mary's presence added, by the benefit of so long a time?" Hence, love to converse with the good, and withal procure that others also may be the better for your company and conversation.

Consider 3.—That which is said in the second book of Kings: "The ark of the Lord abode in the house of Obededom three months; and the Lord blessed Obededom, and all his household."—2 Kings vi. 11. How much more, may we think did He bless the house of Zachary, wherein

the living ark of our Lord, and mother of God, dwelt so long? The like blessing will He pour forth upon your house, when He cometh to you in the Holy Eucharist, if you receive Him as you ought.

FRIDAY.

THE NATIVITY OF ST JOHN.

Consider 1.—The sanctity of St. John's parents. "They were both just, walking in all the commandments and justifications of the Lord without blame."—Luke i. 6. Here detest the perverseness of heretics, that hold all God's commandments impossible; learn to observe all, not only precepts, but also justifications, or counsels, and whatsoever else appertains to the perfection of your calling, that you may be both just in the sight of God, and so deserve the blessing of a son John (that is of divine grace), and be without blame in your life and conversation with men.

Consider 2.—How God did honour the birth of His precursor. 1. In sending the same Angel Gabriel to announce his, and His own Son's birth. 2. In the manner of the annunciation, which was more solemn than that which was made to the Virgin. This being delivered to the high priest in the temple, and *Sancta Sanctorum*, in time of public sacrifice, all the people being in expectation and wonder. 3. In imposing the name Himself, by the angel, which we do not read He did to any other than His Son, and this not an empty name, but full of mystery, making good in effect what it signified in outward sound.

Consider 3.—The dignity of St John's office expressed in those words of the angel: "He shall go before Him," bearing witness, and preaching Christ by word of mouth, and example of life. "In the spirit and virtue of Elias," that is, with an undaunted courage and zeal, which he showed throughout the whole course of his life; in the wilderness, at the river Jordan, in cities, in Herod's court, in prison, and death itself. "To prepare unto the Lord a perfect people," by his baptism, preaching of penance, and the austerity and rigour of his life. Think whether this be not in some part also your vocation, and accordingly excite yourself to imitate the sanctity of St. John.

SATURDAY.

THE NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.—PART I.

Consider 1.—"Elizabeth's full time of being delivered was come, and she brought forth a son."—Luke i. 57. Ponder the joy of the parents, and whole house, and the congratulations of their neighbours and kinsfolk for her delivery of a son, after so many years' barrenness and expectation. No less is the joy of the saints and angels, and comfort of a soul, when it is fruitful of good works, and bringeth to effect what it conceiveth by virtue of divine inspirations. Be not dismayed if you do not presently attain the virtue, or overcome not the vice, which you desire. Keep still in heart, for God is wont to defer His gifts and favours, the more to inflame our desires. "Trust," therefore, "in the Lord, and do good, and He will give thee the desires of thy heart."—Ps. xxxvi. 3, 4.

Consider 2. "John is his name," which signifieth grace; for no saint whatsoever, after Christ and the Blessed Virgin, did so abound with the gifts of grace. For he was by office and purity of life an angel, in spirit, Elias, more than a prophet. Sanctified in his mother's womb, and one, than whom (as Christ Himself witnessed) none among the sons of women ever was greater. Reverence this saint so singularly beloved, and so nearly allied to our Lord, and endeavour to imitate his heroic virtues.

Consider 3.—What happeneth at his birth. 1. The mother, by divine inspiration, giveth him his name. 2. The father, writing the same, on a table, "immediately his mouth was opened, and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God." 3. "He was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied," etc. Observe here, how by penance and due submission, a man riseth greater than he fell. 4. They all marvelled, and fear came upon all their neighbours. 5. All that had heard these things, laid them up in their heart, saying, "What an one, think ye, shall this child be? for the hand of the Lord was with him." Do you likewise lay these things up in your heart by serious meditation, and beg that the hand of our Lord may also be with you.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the Guest of your Soul.

"Zacheus, make haste and come down: for this day I must abide in thy house."—*Luke* xix. 5.

CONSIDER 1.—How Christ, although the Lord of glory and majesty, whom thousands of millions attend on in heaven, is, notwithstanding, wonderfully desirous to make Himself your guest, and to lodge in your soul. Whence, in the Apocalypse, He saith, "I stand at the gate and knock. If any man shall open to me the door, I will sup with him, and he with Me."—Apoc. iii. 20. O what a favour is this! Who are you, and who is He?

Consider 2.—What is said this day in the gospel: "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His paths."—Luke iii. 4. You must make ready the room of your heart, that it may be fit to entertain so great a guest. He is content, and well pleased with what is mean, so it be but cleanly, and, therefore, He would not take flesh, but in the Virgin's purest womb, nor be laid but in a new sepulchre, and wrapped in a pure clean winding-sheet. He is highly taken with humility, and as much offended with pride and self-conceit. If you be a valley, you shall be filled up (as it is said to-day in the gospel), but if you be a hill, or mountain, you shall be humbled, and taken down. Meet Him then, prostrating yourself before Him, and crying out from the bottom of your heart, "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof," etc.—Luke vii. 6.

Consider 3.—With what prompt observance, and hearty welcome, anciently they did entertain their guests. Abraham, the three angels; the Sunamite woman, the prophet Eliseus; Martha, Christ Himself—Gen. xviii. 3. etc.; 4 Kings iv. 8. Do you the like, and the best you have set before Him, that is present Him your whole heart. "My son (saith he), give Me thy heart."—Prov. xxiii. 26. See it be all of a piece, whole and entire, not divided either by self-love, or inordinate affection to things of this world.

MONDAY.

OUR BLESSED LADY'S VIRGINITY REVEALED TO ST. JOSEPH.

Matt. i. 20.

PART I.

Consider 1.—The singular sanctity of St. Joseph answerable to so high an office, though God had not as yet revealed unto him the mystery of the Incarnation, for a proof both of his and the Virgin's virtue. Wherefore perceiving her to be grown big after her return from Elizabeth, he was startled at it, and began to be troubled in mind, doubtful what he should do to keep himself blameless. Thus God is wont to try His servants, though but for a time, for "He will not suffer the just to waver (saith David) for ever."—Ps. liv. 23.

Consider 2.—The many virtues of the holy man in this perplexity of mind. Patience in supporting, and not divulging, the matter. Charity in not reproaching her; prudence in maturely deliberating with himself of what were fit to be done. Do you the like when any thing happeneth amiss in your brother; beware of rash judgment; follow that of St. Bernard: "Excuse the intention, if you cannot the fact; take it for a mistake, judge it a surprise, think it a chance."

Consider 3.—The admirable virtues of the Blessed Virgin in this surprise of Joseph. She allegeth nothing in her own defence, though easily she might. Her honour was in question in a matter of the highest concern, notwithstanding she chose rather to be silent, and to commit the matter to God, than to publish anything that might turn to her own praise. "My secret to myself."—Isa. xxiv. 16. You, perhaps, do not so, but presently blab out whatsoever makes to your commendation, and though you be in fault, make a thousand excuses, one upon the other, in your sins. —Ps. cxl. 4.

TUESDAY.

OUR BLESSED LADY'S VIRGINITY REVEALED TO ST. JOSEPH.

PART II.

"Behold the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in his sleep."—Matt. i. 20. Consider 1.—The sum of the angel's message. 1. He honoureth Joseph with the title of being son of David. 2. He takes away all fear and trouble of mind. 3. He justifieth the Virgin. 4. He informs him of the mystery of the Incarnation. Ponder here how God was not wanting in due time to these holy persons, but when all human means failed, sent them succour from heaven. Admire the Divine Providence, which though it seems to leave us for a while, yet will not abandon us entirely. "For a small moment (saith He) have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee."—Isa. liv. 7.

Consider 2.—What excess of joy St. Joseph was in when he was told of the mystery of the Incarnation, the innocency of his spouse, and her election to be Mother of God; where ıe understood himself to be assumed to that eminent dignity of being not only guardian and spouse to the mother, but also the reputed father of the Son of God, and as father, to give him the name of Jesus. Think how he condemned himself as one rashly jealous. Congratulate with him for this honour, and reverence with singular devotion him whom both mother and son so highly favoured.

Consider 3.—The angel disappearing, probably St. Joseph, impatient of delay, went forthwith to his most innocent spouse, knocked at her chamber door, where she likely was watching in heavenly contemplation, and used those words of the Canticles: "Open to me, my sister, my love, my beautiful one, for winter is now past, the rain is over and gone."—Cant. v. 2, & ii. 11. Then he asked pardon with tears, and recounted to her the whole passage of the angel's vision. Think what joy there was between them. Learn to put your trust in God in like accidents, who "after a storm maketh a calm, and after tears and weeping, poureth in joyfulness."—Tob. iii. 22.

WEDNESDAY.

THE EXPECTATION OF THE VIRGIN'S DELIVERY.

PART I.

Consider 1.—The infant Christ shut up in His mother's womb, did earnestly long for the coming of that hour, wherein He was to appear in the world, to perfect the work of our salvation, so as even then to say: "I have a baptism, wherewith I am to be baptized; and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?"—Luke xii. 50. He contained Himself, notwithstanding, for nine whole months, neither would He dispense one day with Himself in that tedious and painful inclosure, but embraced it as a fit occasion of suffering for us, of which nature He would omit nothing that came in His way. What man in his wits (according to flesh and blood) would suffer himself to be so long shut up in such a prison, though it were to gain the world? Be ashamed then to complain of small inconveniencies, when God Himself suffered so great for you.

Consider 2.—The expectation on the behalf of the mother now near her time, and most desirous to enjoy the sight of her Son, whom she knew to be God of God, and man of her own nature and substance. She did, probably, apply to Him, and herself, those words of the Canticles: "Who shall give Thee to me, my Son, that I may find Thee without, and kiss Thee?"—Cant. viii. 1. In the meanwhile she exercised most ardent affections of love, and conformity to the divine will, both as to the time, place, and conveniences of her delivery, casting herself, and all her care upon God, as St. Peter admonisheth us, "for that He hath care for us."—1 Pet. v. 7. Do you the same in all your affairs, and examine wherein you are deficient.

Consider 3.—How well the Divine Infant did requite the long harbour His mother gave Him in her womb. If at His first entrance in His conception, He bestowed upon her such extraordinary grace and favours, how did He increase them during His nine months' abode! Illuminating her understanding with an infused light and knowledge of the mysteries of faith, and inflaming her will with more than seraphic affection of divine love! He was no burden, nor

pain, nor the least trouble unto her, but a most welcome guest, an ease and comfort on all occasions. He would be so likewise to you in the sacrament, if you would give Him entertainment, and not pour yourself forth presently upon other affairs.

THURSDAY.

THE EXPECTATION OF THE VIRGIN'S DELIVERY.

PART II.

Consider 1.—The expectation on the behalf of the fathers in Limbo, praying continually, and crying out, "Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the Just: let the earth be opened, and bud forth a Saviour."—Isa. xlv. 8. They longed to be set free, that they might presently enjoy the beatific vision. Therefore they said, "Be manifest before Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasses; show us Thy face, and we shall be saved."—Ps. lxxix. 3, 4. Quicken your dull heart with these inflamed desires. "Be ashamed (saith St. Bernard) that the exhibition of this benefit doth not cause in thee a joy answerable to that inflamed desire, which the bare promise enkindled in the hearts of the ancient saints."

Consider 2.—What expectation every devout soul ought to be in, of having Christ spiritually born in itself by grace. "What is my hope? (said David), is it not the Lord?"—Ps. xxxviii. 8. Wherefore we must employ all the faculties of our soul. 1. Our memory and understanding, in a serious and attentive consideration of His admirable virtues and perfections. 2. Our will and ardent affections of love, and desire of expressing in themselves what we behold in Him; that, according to the apostle, "Beholding the glory of the Lord, we may be transformed into the same image."—2 Cor. iii. 18.

Consider 3.—We must not content ourselves with bare affections and desires, for by these we only conceive Christ, not bring Him forth, but we must also, with the apostle, travail in the exercise of Christian perfection, "till Christ be formed in us"—Gal. iv. 19,—labouring to bring to light the good desires, which by divine inspiration we have conceived, otherwise they will but torment our conscience, and

prove at last our ruin, as it often happeneth to mothers when they are disappointed in their expectations, for, as the wise man saith, "Desires kill the slothful."—Prov. xxi. 25. Wherefore encourage yourself, and inflame your heart by means of these Antiphons the Church useth these days, saying, "O wisdom, which hast issued forth of the mouth of the highest, etc., O Adonai,"—Ecclesia in Officio Advent.—and the like.

FRIDAY.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN'S JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM.

"There went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus," etc.—Luke ii. 1.

Consider 1.—The wonderful disposition of the Divine Providence. Christ could have been born where, at what time, and with what ease and convenience He had pleased; He would, notwithstanding, debar Himself of all, and disposed it so, that it should happen to be in the winter, and that Cæsar's edict should send His parents far from home, that He may be deprived even of those small conveniencies wherewith He might, in some sort, have been provided at Nazareth. "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God!"—Rom. xi. 33. Go now, you that seek so greedily after your own ease and pleasures. "Either God is deceived, or the world is in error" (saith St. Bernard), because their maxims are quite contrary to one another.

Consider 2.—St. Joseph's and the Blessed Virgin's obedience to the edict, with their own great inconvenience, performing a long journey of about a hundred miles. Look upon the travellers; see with what modesty, patience, and conformity to God's will they carry themselves in all things. Think what sweet discourses the Virgin holdeth with her Son. "My beloved to me, and I to Him, etc. Behold He standeth behind our wall, looking through the windows, looking forth by the lattices."—Cant. ii. 9, 16. "For all things are naked and open to His eyes."—Heb. iv. 13. Out of everything gather something for yourself.

Consider 3.—When they were come to Bethlehem, they went about all the inns, but could find no entertainment. Good God! there was place for the refuse of men, but no

room to be found for the Son of God! "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."—John i. 11. See how patiently they bear this repulse, and betake themselves to a cave, or open and ruined stall. Imitate, and love to be set behind all. O how true was that, "the foxes have holes, and the fowls of the air nests, but the Son of Man hath not whereon to repose His head." Think how often you have denied Him entertainment, while your heart was wholly taken up and full of worldly vanities.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as a little one.

"Whosoever is a little one, let him come to Me."—Prov. ix. 4.

CONSIDER 1.—What is said by Isaias: "A Child is born to us, and a Son is given to us."—Isa. ix. 6. And in the gospel, "You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes."—Luke ii. 12. Thus the Lord of majesty delighteth in the name of a little one; and that He might be such, brought Himself in a manner to nothing. See how little He is in His crib, "who weigheth the heavens in His palm, who poiseth with three fingers the bulk of the earth."—Isa. xl. 12.

Consider 2.—This little one will come to be spiritually born this day in your hearts, by holy communion, if you prepare Him a crib in Bethlehem, that is, in the house of bread. He appeared to men first in flesh; now He will communicate Himself anew unto you in bread, to impart unto you, by this living bread, His own divine and immortal life. Go then to this divine mystery, so that He may be born anew in your heart; which will certainly be if you begin to lead a life conformable to His, if you love nothing but what He loved, that you may say with the apostle, "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me."—Gal. ii. 20.

Consider 3.—That you may enjoy this little one, you must become such a one yourself. "Unless you become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. xviii. 3. Provide, therefore, for this little one a crib, or place of repose in your soul, swathe Him with the band of charity, defend Him from the cold of a frozen heart. Lastly, "be little in your own eyes"—1 Kings xv. 17,—that you may deserve to be made "chief in the tribes," that is, great among the saints. The secrets of His wisdom He revealeth to the little ones; "The testimony of the Lord is faithful (saith David), giving wisdom to little ones."—Ps. xviii. 8; Matt. xi. 25.

ST. STEPHEN'S DAY.

OUR SAVIOUR'S BIRTH.—PART I.

Consider 1.—The Blessed Virgin being in the cave or stable at Bethlehem, and perceiving her time to draw near, retired as much as the place would permit, and being in spirit wholly fixed upon God by most high contemplation, behold on a sudden, bringeth forth into the world the Eternal Light. The Blessed Infant issued forth without the breach of His mother's virginal purity, as afterwards He rose from His monument, though shut up and made fast; and as the great Master of Humility, at His first entrance into the world, casteth Himself on the bare ground. What feeling had the Virgin at that time? What affections of reverence towards her God, of love towards her Son? See how she takes Him in her lap, kisses Him, wraps Him in swathing bands, lays Him in the manger between beasts, that by their warm breath He might in some manner be sheltered from the cold. See how she adoreth, and giveth thanks for His coming into the world, and making choice of her to be His mother; how St. Joseph also performeth his part; and out of all draw something for your own benefit.

Consider 2.—What joy there was in heaven. How well pleased was the Heavenly Father at this new sight. "And again, when He bringeth in the first begotten into the world, let all the angels of God adore Him."—Heb. i. 6. See how the angels fall prostrate on their faces, and adore

Him, saying, "Holy, holy, holy," etc.—In Breviar. And to the Blessed Virgin, "O Blessed Mother of God whose womb remaining untouched, brought forth the Saviour of the world."—2d. Matut. Rejoice and congratulate with both, and adore your new-born Saviour.

Consider 3.—Then was fulfilled that of Isaias: "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel hath not known Me, and My people hath not understood."—Isa. i. 3. "See how these silly creatures by divine instinct, prostrating themselves, adore their Creator."—St. Bonaventure. "See whether you be not one of those Israelites, and do not yet know your Lord, being more insensible than the very brute beasts themselves."—Corn. in Is. c. 1. For "he who saith he knoweth God, and keepeth not His commandments is a liar."—1 John ii. 4.

ST. JOHN'S DAY.

OUR SAVIOUR'S BIRTH.—PART II.

Imagine yourself in the cave or stable at Bethlehem, fixing your eyes on the Blessed Infant lying in the manger; ponder these general circumstances. Who? What? Where? By what means? Why? How? and When?

Who is this infant? The only begotten Son of God, and true God of God. "The Lord God of hosts is His name."—Amos iv. 13. "The pillars of heaven tremble and dread at His beck."—Job xxvi. 11. Infinitely powerful, infinitely wise; immense, eternal, incomprehensible, etc.

What? He lieth as one helpless; He suffereth extremity of cold; He is wrapped in poor swaddling clothes; He crieth and sheddeth tears as other infants.

Where? Far from His own country and home; in a stable, in a manger; between two brute beasts, as "a worm, and no man, the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people."—Ps. xxi. 7.

With what means or conveniences? Destitute of all; without bed, without fire, without any manner of accommodation; no servants or attendants; having none about Him but His poor parents, by whose care and labour He was maintained.

Why? For your sake, for love of you, to give you

example, "To restore lost man to the kingdom of heaven." —In Offic. Nativ. Domini.

How? Not forced, but of His own free election. "He was offered because it was His own will."—Isa. liii. 7. Cheerfully, and with joy; therefore entering into the world. "He hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way"—Ps. xviii. 6,—though rough and painful.

When? In the very depth of winter; at midnight; a time the most inconvenient of all others; and yet both times and moments are all in His power.—Acts i. 7. Be astonished, give thanks, return love, etc. And if you receive to-day this Blessed Infant into the crib of your heart, be careful to entertain Him well.

HOLY INNOCENTS' DAY.

OUR SAVIOUR'S BIRTH.—PART III.

Consider 1.—The admirable virtues which are resplendent in this mystery. 1. The infinite goodness and benignity of God. His power appeared in the first creation of the world: providence in the government; but, after all, in this mystery, as St. Paul saith, "appeared the goodness and kindness of God our Saviour" towards man.—Tit. iii. 4. He was made man, that He might the better be known by man; born in poverty and want, that He might the more endear Himself unto us; in an open stable, to be the more easily found; He lieth in a manger, to encourage the poor; His hands are bound, that you need not fear to approach; He concealeth His power, to take away terror; He putteth on meekness, to win you to Himself, etc.

Consider 2.—His extreme poverty, and love thereof, expressed in this mystery. He made choice of a poor humble maid for His mother, and of a carpenter for His reputed father. He was born out of house and home, and in a stable; lodged, not in any bed of His own, but in a manger, upon hay or straw, without sheets or blankets, only wrapped up in a few clothes; and all this being the Lord of all things; "for you (saith the apostle) know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that being rich He became poor for your sakes; that through His poverty you might be rich."—

2 Cor. viii. 9. If you be wise, therefore, be rich by imitating His poverty.

Consider 3.—The incomparable example of His admirable humility, who, being by nature God equal to the Father, debasing Himself to the despicable condition of a slave, and that the very vilest of them, "and the most abject of men" —Isa. liii. 3,—nay, He is become for us as a beast—Ps. lxxii. 23,—even lying amongst them, that so high He might be with us, without any regard to His honour, which you are so miserably fond of. Be confounded, for that, being but a worm, you will wish to be looked upon and regarded above others.

ST. THOMAS'S (OF CANTERBURY) DAY.

THE MESSAGE SENT TO THE SHEPHERDS.—PART I.

Consider 1.—Christ having humbled Himself so low as the manger, God His Father would honour Him, and make Him known to the shepherds by angels, and to the wise men by a star; "because every one that humbleth himself shall be exalted."—Luke xiv. 11. Ponder the words of the evangelist: "And there were in the same country shepherds watching, and keeping the night watches over their flock; and behold an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them."—Luke ii. 8, 9.

Consider 2.—Christ would not be made known to the wise men about Bethlehem, because they were proud; nor to the rich, because they were covetous; nor to the noble, because they were given to pleasures; but to shepherds, that is, men that were poor, humble, laborious, vigilant, and careful in their office. Be you, therefore, such a one, and be watchful over yourself, that you may deserve to be visited with divine illuminations.

Consider 3.—Such a shepherd, or pastor was St. Thomas, whose feast you celebrate this day; and, therefore, the gospel of the Good Shepherd is applied unto him. For the same reason, Christ manifested Himself unto him after a special manner, towards an eminent degree of sanctity in this life, and is now seen and enjoyed by him in the other, to an equal proportion of glory. See his zeal for the Church of God; his constancy in adversity, and piety in

prosperity; and do your utmost to imitate him. And if you be to receive to-day Christ the chief pastor, in the Holy Eucharist, beseech Him to instruct you how to feed and govern, according to His and St. Thomas's example, the flock committed to your charge; which, in the first place, is your own soul, with all its powers, faculties, and senses; then those that are under your charge, that by virtue of His divine illuminations you may yourself be enlightened all over, and withal be a light to others, both by word and example: for, as St. Gregory saith, "The flame of fire of the shepherd is the light of the flock."—Greg. Ep. xxii. lib. 7.

DECEMBER XXX.

THE MESSAGE SENT TO THE SHEPHERDS.—PART II.

Consider 1.—These words of the angel, "I bring you good tidings of great joy," etc., "for this day is born to you a Saviour."—Luke ii. 10, 11. The joys of the world are either base or vain; the only true and solid content is of God, and of things appertaining to our eternal salvation; and this "joy (as our Saviour saith), no man shall take from you."—John xvi. 22. Think, therefore, what cause you have to rejoice for the birth of this Saviour, who "saveth His people from their sins"—Matt. i. 21,—from the power and slavery of the devil, from hell and damnation, bestoweth upon them all manner of spiritual blessings, grace, virtue, and life everlasting; and this to you as much as to all the world beside, and even this day, and at all times that you will yourself. Say, therefore, with the Prophet, "I will rejoice in the Lord, and I will joy in God my Jesus."—Habac. iii. 18.

Consider 2.—"And this shall be a sign to you. You shall find the Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger." Good God! what signs are these of the Messias, the Lord, and Saviour of the world? Infancy, swaddling clothes, and manger! Who would not have expected he should have heard of courts, thrones, purple robes, etc.? Try whether you can find such signs of poverty and humility in your heart; that thence you may come to know whether Christ be as yet spiritually born within you.

Consider 3.—"And suddenly there was with the angel a

multitude of the heavenly army, praising God," etc. O what heavenly music was then heard! O with what angelic harmony was then first entoned *Gloria in excelsis Deo:* "Glory to God in the highest." Learn hence to praise and glorify God in all things. "And on earth peace to men of good will." Hence also learn that peace, both interior and exterior, with God and our neighbour, is a peculiar gift of Christ. For "in His days shall justice spring up, and abundance of peace."—Ps. lxxi. 7. O how much is this peace to be wished for! Yet it is not bestowed but upon "men of good will," that is, rightly subordinate to God; for, "There is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord."—Isa. xlviii. 22.

DECEMBER XXXI.

THE SHEPHERDS' ADORATION.

Consider 1.—"Let us go over to Bethlehem."—Luke ii. 15, etc. See their prompt obedience. With the same readiness ought you likewise to obey divine inspirations. "And they came with speed," that you may learn to be fervent in the service of God; for (as St. Ambrose saith), "nobody seeketh Christ slothfully." Go you also, and that frequently, over to Bethlehem, considering the mysteries that were there exhibited for your salvation. Say with David, "O that some man would give me a drink of the water out of the cistern, that is in Bethlehem!"—2 Kings xxiii. 15. The cistern is the cave, the water is Christ, who "is the fountain of living water"—Jer. ii. 13,—and "the fountain of wisdom."—Eccles.

Consider 2.—"And they found Mary and Joseph, and the Infant," etc. Whence you may learn that the readiest way to find Christ is by means of the Blessed Virgin, and the intercession of the Saints. See with what spiritual joy the shepherds adore; what presents they offer; how they afterwards return, and recount to others what had passed; "glorifying and praising God in all things that they had seen and heard." And out of all gather something.

Consider 3.—"But Mary kept all these words," etc. Observe four several sorts of persons then in Bethlehem. 1. Some passing by, saw the shepherds and the crib, but not finding anything extraordinary, passed on without any

further notice or feeling. 2. Others heard and admired what the shepherds related unto them; but, being busied with other affairs, thought no more of it. 3. The shepherds themselves adored also, and with a lively faith, but returned afterwards to their own, uncertain of the event. 4. Only the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph thought upon the mystery, pondering each particular, and bearing them constantly in mind. Think what rank you are of, or would wish to be.

THE FEAST OF THE CIRCUMCISION.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as He is, Jesus or Saviour.

"Behold, thy Saviour cometh."—Isa. lxii. 11. "Save me, O God, by Thy name."—Ps. liii. 3. Consider 1.—What is read to-day in the Gospel, to wit, that in His circumcision, "His name was called Jesus"—Luke ii. 21,—that is, Saviour; and with reason, for to-day He sheddeth His first blood, as the earnest of our redemption, being to pay the remainder of our ransom on Mount Calvary; so as to make good that of the Psalmist: "And with Him (there is) plentiful redemption."—Ps. cxxix. 7. If Joseph and some others were called saviours, for having delivered the people from famine and temporal death, how much more justly is Christ so called, who saveth us from that which is everlasting? "For He (saith the angel) shall save His people from their sins."—Matt. i. 21.

Consider 2.—This Saviour will come to you to-day in the Holy Eucharist, to "save thy soul out of distresses."—Ps. xxx. 8. To deliver you from your spiritual enemies, giving strength and forces to overcome them. He will wash and cleanse you with the sacred blood He shed this day; and lastly, He being the beginning both of the year and of all other things, will give you Himself as a new year's gift, and pledge of a happy year, being willing to abide continually with you, if you will yourself. O what a benefit!

Consider 3.—You must prepare a lodging in your soul for the coming of your Saviour. First, by humility, acknowledging your own unworthiness and His greatness; for, as the Prophet saith, "He will save the humble of spirit."—Ps. xxxiii. 19. Secondly, by a great confidence in His goodness; for, He maketh His mercies marvellous, and saveth them that hope in Him.—Ps. xvi. 7. Prepare also a new year's gift for Him, saying with David, "I am Thine, save me; receive Thy servant unto good."—Ps. cxix. 94, etc. "A contrite and humble heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."—Ps. l. 19.

OUR LORD'S CIRCUMCISION.—PART I.

Consider 1.—Christ was not subject to the law of circumcision, as being incapable of contracting original sin, whose remedy it was: He would, notwithstanding, undergo it, though most painful. 1. To honour the law in His own person. 2. Not to offend others by His singularity. 3. That He might soon begin to shed His blood for us. 4. That having taken upon Himself our sins, He might also undergo the penalty. 5. To give us an example of obedience to the law of God, of contempt of all worldly reputation, and of mortifying ourselves. Learn to do even what you are not obliged unto, and to seek the mortification of your flesh; and covet not the reputation of a Saint, seeing you cannot but confess yourself a sinner.

Consider 2.—Probably Christ was circumcised by His mother or St. Joseph, seeing the law did not prescribe any certain place or minister. Think with what tenderness they performed this action, with what compassion towards the child and resignation to the will of God, for they knew He was not subject to the law. Stir up in yourself like affections of compassion, resignation, etc.

Consider 3.—The affections of the Infant. How He willingly offereth Himself to His Divine Father, to suffer in satisfaction for your unlawful pleasures, how patiently He endureth the pain; how, at the same time, He crieth as an infant, but rejoiceth withal for thus promoting your salvation. He is this day "truly" become a "bloody spouse"—Exod. iv. 26,—espousing us to Himself, not as David did Michol—1 Kings xviii. 27,—in the foreskins of the Philis-

tines, but in His own precious blood. Excite yourself to suffer something for your Spouse, who endured so much for love of you.

OUR LORD'S CIRCUMCISION.—PART II.

"His name was called Jesus."—Luke ii. 21. Consider 1. —After the painful act of Circumcision, is given Him "a name which is above all names."—Phil. ii. 9. For God honoureth them that suffer any thing for His sake, and exalteth those that humble themselves. Behold the Blessed Virgin pronouncing this holy name, which she learned of the angel, saying, "Jesus is His name." See how at the first utterance thereof, all in heaven, on earth, and in hell, bent their knees; how all were transported with joy, but chiefly the Blessed Mother, saying with the prophet, "I will rejoice in God my Jesus."—Habac. iii. 18. Do you also rejoice for the imposing this sacred name "whereby we must be saved."—Acts iv. 12.

Consider 2.—The excellencies of this name Jesus, or Saviour, for it expresseth all the divine perfections. 1. Power, for that He hath taken us out of the hands of our most powerful enemy. 2. Wisdom, whereby He overreached His adversary, appearing in the form of a slave, and concealing under it that of God. 3. Charity, whereby, without any benefit to Himself, and with His own great pains and labour, He sets us at liberty. 4. Sanctity, for unless He had been without all blemish Himself, He could not have cleansed others from their sins. 5. Divinity, for none but God could pay the infinite debt of sin. 6. His dominion over all men, whom He bought with His precious blood. Truly, "Thy name is as oil poured out."—Cant. i. 2, —dilating its sweet odour in all manner of spiritual graces.

Consider 3.—How highly you ought to reverence this holy name; how greatly you should be attached to it; how carefully to labour in propagating its glory; following the counsel of the Apostle: "All whatsoever you do in word or in work, all things do ye in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."—Col. iii. 17. Beg of Him to make good the exposition of His name, and to save you. Say with the prophet, "Help us, O God our Saviour, and for the glory of

Thy name, O Lord, deliver us; and forgive us our sins, for Thy name's sake."—Ps. lxxviii. 9.

OUR SPIRITUAL CIRCUMCISION.—PART I.

Consider 1.—Every Christian ought spiritually to be circumcised, after the example of His Lord and leader. This we are enjoined in those words of the prophet, "Be circumcised to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your hearts, ye men of Juda, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem; lest my indignation come forth like fire, and burn, and there be none that can quench it; because of the wickedness of your thoughts."—Jer. iv. 4. Hence conceive how great necessity there is of it, and take care not to incur God's wrath and indignation.

Consider 2.—"This circumcision (as St. Bernard noteth) must be throughout the whole man. Therefore, search yourself narrowly; cut off all inordinate passions, and all manner of superfluities, which may any ways hinder your spiritual progress."—Bern. Ser. 1, de Circum. In the first place, you must take away all stiffness in judgment of opinion, which is the fountain and origin of many evils, for, hence all manner of heresies, illusions of the devil, dissensions, strifes, and the like take their beginning. Wherefore detest it, as the plague and bane of virtue. Learn to submit it willingly to the Church; your superiors and spiritual directors, whom you have in place of God; and as the wise man counselleth, "Lean not upon Thy own prudence"—Prov. iii. 5, 7,—and "Be not wise in Thy own conceit."

Consider 3.—You must also circumcise self-love, the greatest enemy man hath. It blindeth the understanding, it inflames the mind with "hurtful desires, which drown men into destruction and perdition."—1 Tim. vi. 9. Such are the desires of having; of enjoying the conveniencies of this life; of being honoured and esteemed by men; of having our actions taken notice of, and preferred before others; likewise the desire of vain and unprofitable knowledge, love of vanities and pleasures of this world, and the like. Cut off, therefore all these, and cast them away from you.—Matt. v. 30. Deny yourself, and follow your Lord.

OUR SPIRITUAL CIRCUMCISION.—PART II.

Consider 1.—Not only the inward man, as above, in the understanding and will, but also the outward, in the exterior senses, is to be circumcised. Think with yourself how many souls have been cast into hell, by occasion of one single glance of the eye? How many have perished by the abuse of the other senses, of hearing, tasting, etc. Wherefore refrain your eyes from the sight of dangerous objects, chiefly of women and unchaste pictures; your ears from any thing that soundeth of vanity, curiosity, and much more of dishonesty, murmuring, and detraction; your taste from excess in eating and drinking, also unnecessary and untimely repasts, and so of the rest.

Consider 2.—You must not omit among the rest, to have a guard on your tongue, and cut off from it all detraction, murmuring, and whatsoever else serveth to sow discord. Likewise all manner of contemptuous, injurious, saucy, unseemly, or immodest language. Also lying, cursing, swearing and the like. Lastly, flattery, double-dealing, dissimulation, vain compliments, etc., that you may be like to your Lord, of whom it is said, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth."—1 Pet. ii. 22. Examine yourself in each particular, and beseech our Lord with David, to set a watch to your mouth, and a door round about your lips.—Ps. cxl. 3. For, "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man."—James iii. 2. On the contrary, "If any man think himself to be religious, not bridling his tongue," etc., "this man's religion is vain." —James i. 26.

Consider 3.—You must finally cut off all superfluities relating to the body; as in clothing, sleep, pastimes, and other conveniencies of this life; "Having food (saith the apostle), and wherewith to be covered, with these we are content."—1 Tim. vi. 8. Wherefore quit yourself of all other things, that you may the more resemble Christ, who saith of Himself, "I am poor, and in labours from my youth."—Ps. lxxxvii. 16.

THE FEAST OF EPIPHANY.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as your Sovereign Lord, to be adored with offerings.

"Take with thee presents, and go to meet him."
4 *Kings* viii. 8.

CONSIDER 1.—What is read to-day in the Introit of the Mass: "Behold there cometh the Sovereign Lord, and a kingdom in His hand," etc.—Matt. ii. 2—to wit, that Christ is the Supreme Lord of the whole earth, to whom all men, even kings and princes, are to pay tribute in acknowledgment of His Sovereignty. This the sages by divine instinct, understood, and accordingly came this day to offer their gifts. We are come (say they), to adore Him; "and opening their treasures, they offered Him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh."—Matt. ii. 11.

Consider 2.—This Sovereign Lord will come into your soul to receive your tribute and presents; and withal to return other far more precious gifts. Wherefore, "Take gifts with you, and go forth to meet Him." Bethink with yourself what you can offer; for in Deuteronomy it was forbidden that any one should appear before our Lord without offerings. "No one shall appear with his hands empty before the Lord. But every one shall offer according to what he hath."—Deut. xvi. 16, 17.

Consider 3.—You must prepare a throne in the midst of your heart, wherein to place and adore your Lord, when He cometh. Make Him a present of the three powers of your soul: memory, understanding, and will; so that He may wholly dispose of them at His pleasure, and not permit you to know, affect, or even think of any thing that may be displeasing to Him. Offer Him the gold of charity and love, the frankincense of prayer, the myrrh of mortification. In fine, give as much as you can, for it will be returned back with advantage.

SUNDAY IN THE OCTAVE OF EPIPHANY.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the Teacher of Justice.

"I am the Lord thy God, that teach thee profitable things."
Is. xlviii. 17.

"Shew, O Lord, Thy ways to me, and teach me Thy paths."
Ps. xxiv. 4.

CONSIDER 1.—What is read to-day in the gospel, that Christ was found in the midst of the doctors, hearing them, etc. He is truly our doctor or teacher, not of profane erudition, but of justice. Whence the prophet: "O children of Sion, rejoice, and be joyful in the Lord your God, because He hath given you a teacher of justice."—Joel ii. 23. And He Himself by the mouth of David inviteth us to a lesson of the fear of God, saying, "Come, children, hearken to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord."—Ps. xxxiii. 12.

Consider 2.—How much this science of justice ought to be preferred to all worldly sciences; these cannot save us, but may serve to increase our damnation if we make not right use of them; this alone can make us happy for ever. Hence, think what a benefit it will be to have this doctor come to-day into your soul; for truly "blessed is the man whom Thou shalt instruct, O Lord, and shalt teach him out of Thy law."—Ps. xciii. 12.

Consider 3.—How Christ sat to-day in the temple among the doctors. See therefore that your soul be a "temple of the living God"—2 Cor. vi. 6—(as the apostle warneth us), not of Dagon, that is of sin. Let it be a house of prayer, not of worldly negotiation, not a den of thieves, that is, of vain thoughts of self-esteem, robbing God of the honour which is due to Him alone. Then with all humility fall at the feet of your Lord, with Magdalen, and beseech Him to teach you the way of salvation: for "they that approach to His feet, shall receive of His doctrine."—Deut. xxxiii. 3. Lastly, bring with you an eagerness to learn, and resolve to put in execution, what He shall say unto you; lest otherwise He leave you to yourself, according to that of the

prophet: "Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem, lest my soul depart from thee."—Jer. vi. 8.

JOURNEY OF THE WISE MEN TOWARDS JERUSALEM. PART I.

Consider 1.—Our Lord being born, a star appeared in the east; and the Eternal Father, as He had revealed His Son's birth to the Jews by an angel, so would He likewise manifest the same to the Gentiles by a Star; as being equally Saviour to both Jew and Gentile. Rejoice that the glory and greatness of your Lord was thus made known to the remote nations of the world, and give God thanks for having "made known His salvation in the sight of the Gentiles"—Ps. xcvii. 2—whose first fruits these sages were: and in them to yourself.

Consider 2.—The star of the east appeared to all that were in those parts, but few would stir to seek out our Lord, or obey God's call. Thus "many are called, but few chosen."—Matt. xxii. 14. Many there are to this day, so wholly bent upon their temporal affairs, that they neglect the light of divine inspirations. They pretend a thousand difficulties, saying, "There is a lion without: I shall be slain."—Prov. xxii. 13. But (as Job saith) "they that fear the hoar frost, the snow shall fall upon them."—Job vi. 16. And they that are overmuch concerned for temporal losses, will incur that which is irreparable and everlasting.

Consider 3.—The singular benefit bestowed upon the sages, that they above all others should be efficaciously moved to seek Christ, even with neglect of all their other concerns. Such is the benefit, whereby, among so many thousands, God had vouchsafed to "call you out of darkness into His marvellous light."—1 Pet. ii. 9. Wherefore be ever grateful for it. Ponder, besides, how the sages having overcome all difficulties enter upon their journey, and how they encourage and comfort one another. See how the star goeth before, and directeth their steps. In like manner, to them that, with courage and resolution, undertake any enterprise in the service of God, there will not be wanting the conduct and assistance of divine grace. They follow the course of the star; do you follow the guides which God had given you of holy inspirations, superiors, spiritual directors, etc.

JOURNEY OF THE WISE MEN TOWARDS JERUSALEM.

PART II.

Consider 1.—The sages being come near to Jerusalem, the star disappeareth, in trial of their faith and constancy; so God often withdraws spiritual comfort from His servants, that they may know it is none of their own, but a free gift of His; and withal to exercise their patience and fidelity towards Him. The sages are perhaps somewhat troubled at it, yet do not thereupon leave off their journey. So you, when spiritual consolation is taken from you, do not therefore be disheartened, but betake yourself to ordinary means; inquire of others, with the Spouse in the Canticles, "Have you seen Him whom my soul loveth?"—Cant. iii. 3. Inform yourself by reading spiritual books; consult with your ghostly Father, etc.

Consider 2.—How being entered the city, they boldly inquire after a new-born king, saying, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?"—Matt. ii. 2. Ponder 1. Their singular faith, wherewith nothing doubting of the fact, they only sought after the place. 2. Their great courage, being not afraid, even in the royal city, and in the face of Herod himself, to make public inquiry after another king. 3. Their admirable devotion, being not ashamed openly to confess Christ, and acknowledge they came to do homage to Him: "And we are come to adore Him." Learn to do the like; and with Saint Paul, not to be "ashamed of the Gospel."—Rom. i. 16.

Consider 3.—"Herod was troubled." So the wicked grieve, where they should most rejoice, and on the contrary "rejoice in most wicked things."—Prov. ii. 14. Think whether you do not feel some inward grudge, repining and trouble, when good times put you in mind of disposing yourself to the Sacraments; or when any of greater perfection is proposed unto you; being loth to lose anything of your wonted liberty. "And all Jerusalem with him." Thus inferiors do easily conform to higher powers, especially in what is evil. Learn to rejoice only in things appertaining to your eternal salvation, and to give good example to such as are under your charge.

HEROD'S INQUIRY AFTER CHRIST.

"Assembling together all the high priests and the Scribes of the people, he inquired of them where Christ should be born." And again, "privately calling the wise men, diligently learned of them the time of the star," etc. —Matt. ii. 4, etc. Consider here, 1. How diligent and full of care worldlings are in their temporal concerns; and how dull and slothful you are in those of heaven; Herod made greater search after Christ to destroy Him, than you do to love and serve Him. 2. The wonderful providence of God, which maketh even the wicked instrumental in concurring with His divine will to our good; and disposeth so, that Herod himself was the cause of manifesting Christ to the sages, and so to the world, while he thought to take His life away.

Consider 2.—How the priests and Scribes point out the place of His birth, saying, "in Bethlehem of Judea;" but would not stir a foot themselves, miserable wretches! They perish near the fountain of life, which they had discovered to others. So do all they that preach to others the way to heaven, which they will never follow themselves: "Like," saith St. Augustine, "to the builders of Noah's Ark, who built that wherein others might escape the deluge, and perished themselves in the waters. Observe how Christ was not to be found in the head city, or at court, or in a palace, but "in Bethlehem," in a manger, and in swaddling clothes, and, as Job saith, "he is not found in the land of them that live in delights."—Job xxviii. 13.

Consider 3.—Herod's words to the sages: "Go and diligently inquire after the child, and when you have found Him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore Him." Thus did he think to make a prey of Christ; O sacrilegious hypocrite! to adore in words, and kill in heart the Son of God. But God blinded him so, as not to think of sending a messenger with them, that might inform him of everything; that hence you might learn "there is no wisdom, there is no prudence, there is no counsel against the Lord, etc. Who catcheth the wise in their craftiness, and disappointeth the counsel of the wicked."—Prov. xxi. 30; Job v. 13.

THE SAGES' ARRIVAL AND ADORATION AT BETHLEHEM.

Consider 1.—The sages "having heard the king, went their way." In seeking Christ they lose no time, but having informed themselves where they might find Him, leaving the city with all its curiosities and entertainments, they proceed on their journey. O that you did seek Christ as closely, and not let yourself be taken up with worldly vanities. "And behold the star, etc., went before them." For God is wont to be the more liberal of His illuminations the farther we are off from the trouble and noise of worldly affairs. "Until it came and stood over where the Child was." Thus the Divine Providence reacheth from end to end mightily. "And seeing the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy;" especially when they saw it point out the place where they were to find what their hearts had so long wished and sought for.

Consider 2.—"And entering into the house, they found the Child, with Mary His mother." Ponder their admirable faith, not being startled at a loathsome stable, and an infant lying in a manger; not doubting anything of the mystery. Consider the tears of devotion which the vileness of the house, the poverty and rags, together with the beauty of the Infant, and the Virgin's modesty did move them to. How were they struck with admiration to see the King of kings, and Lord of lords (as now by faith they knew Him to be) lying in a stable upon a bed of straw.

Consider 3.—"And falling down they adored Him." 1. They prostrated themselves with most profound humility, as well interior as exterior, acknowledging their own unworthiness and their subjection and dependence on Him. 2. They adored Him with a most perfect act of adoration, as their Sovereign Lord and God. 3. This adoration was with an entire oblation of themselves, and their kingdoms, with sincere expressions of gratitude, both for their own particular, and for the general benefit of all, in His incarnation, and vocation of the Gentiles, together with most ardent affections of love, and desires that all the world might come to His knowledge and service. Learn hence, what admirable effects a lively faith doth work in a devout

soul, and with what affections you are to come to the same Lord in the holy Eucharist.

THE SAGES' OFFERINGS OF GIFTS.

"And opening their treasures, they offer to Him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh."—Matt. ii. 11. Consider how, with the above-named affections of faith, humility, reverence, and love, they offer gifts in homage to their sovereign Lord, and that of the best things they had, and out of their treasures; that you might learn to give to God, and to employ the best, not the worst things you have, in divine uses. Consider the gifts in particular, and present yours jointly with them. They offer gold as tribute to their Lord and King. Offer Him also gold, that is, 1. A heart full of charity, loving Him with your whole soul; for as gold is the chief of metals, so charity is the queen of virtues. 2. Exterior worldly goods, with an affection and love of poverty, setting them all at naught in respect of His divine service, so as to be ready even actually to leave all, rather than to offend Him even venially.

Consider 2.—They offer frankincense in acknowledgment of His divinity. Offer also your frankincense of fervent and frequent prayer, saying with David, "Let my prayer, O Lord, be directed as incense in Thy sight."—Ps. cxl. 2. Offer again to God your frankincense, that is, your will, as a most sweet perfume, and this by obedience to your superiors, governors, and directors, whom God hath appointed in His place over you. For there is no sacrifice more grateful to Him, than that of our will by means of obedience. "Obedience (saith Samuel) is better than sacrifices."—1 Kings xv. 22.

Consider 3.—They offer myrrh as to a mortal man. Offer you also the myrrh (which is of a bitter taste) of mortification, chastising your body with St. Paul, and bringing it under subjection, so as to obey the spirit. Offer also a special myrrh of chastity, carefully avoiding whatsoever may damage it; for as myrrh preserveth dead bodies from corruption, so chastity doth keep both the bodies and minds of the living undefiled.—St. Greg. Orat. 16. Lastly, consecrate your whole self to God, and give whatsoever you have to Him, who hath given you all things.

THE OCTAVE OF THE EPIPHANY.*

THE SAGES' RETURN.

Consider 1.—How the sages having performed their homage and duty of adoration, having also presented the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph with some gifts, and taken their leave, were now ready for their return, full of spiritual joy and zeal of bringing others to Christ, and amongst them Herod himself, but were admonished in their sleep that they should not go back to him. Whence you may learn, that God hath a care of such as are His, and can easily frustrate the subtile intentions of the wicked. And that in the way of virtue, not every motion which seems to be according to zeal, ought always to be followed. But we must "try the spirits if they be of God"—1 John iv. 1,—for oftentimes, as the Apostle witnesseth, "Satan transformeth himself into an angel of light."—2 Cor. xi. 14.

Consider 2.—How they presently obeyed, and "went back another way into their country"—Matt. ii. 12—So ought we to follow the inspirations of God, and they that have had more knowledge and experience of Christ, should enter into another course of life, of greater exactness and perfection in their progress towards their heavenly country, from which, "seeing we turned away for pleasures, we should return by the contrary way of sorrow and repentance." Think how the Blessed Virgin behaved herself in all these passages, and what joy she was in to see her Son thus adored, and the words of the Prophet fulfilled: "The kings of Tharsis and the islands shall offer presents," etc.—Ps. lxxi. 10. Recommend yourself earnestly to her, saying with St. Bernard, "By you (Virgin Mother) let us have access to your Son."—Orat. St. Bern.

Consider 3.—The blessed Infant did not send the sages away empty, but highly rewarded them for their pains and devotion. He bestowed upon them supernatural and heavenly gifts in return for theirs; for their gold, He gave them the rich treasures of wisdom and charity; for their

* If the Octave fall upon Sunday, make this meditation on Saturday, and on Sunday, of Communion as above.

frankincense, the gift of prayer and devotion; for their myrrh, the sovereign balm of His Divine grace, against the corruption of sin. We can give nothing to God, that returneth not with advantage to ourselves; the more we give, the more we shall receive. Be liberal therefore to God that He may be so to you, remembering what the Apostle saith, "He who soweth sparingly, shall also reap sparingly; and he who soweth in blessings, shall also reap of blessings."—2 Cor. ix. 6.*

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the Spouse of your soul.

"Behold the Bridegroom cometh; go ye forth to meet Him."—*Matt.* xxv. 6.

CONSIDER 1.—What is read to-day in the Gospel, "There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee," etc.—John ii. 1. The like espousals will be made this day between Christ and your soul, if you will but give your consent; for He on His part doth earnestly desire it, according to that, "I will espouse thee to Me for ever, and I will espouse thee to Me in justice, and judgment, and in mercy, and in commiserations."—Osee ii. 19. Nay, although you have often been disloyal unto Him by your inordinate affection, and adhering to creatures, He is, notwithstanding, ready to pardon all, and even invites you again to Him by the Prophet, "Thou hast prostituted thyself to many lovers; nevertheless return unto Me, saith the Lord, and I will receive thee."—Jer. ix. 1.

Consider 2.—How great a dignity it is to be espoused to a king here upon earth. How much greater then to the

* If there remain any days between the Octave and the second Sunday, repeat these meditations, according to the number of the days. If a whole week, then on Monday take the Meditation of the Purification, and go on with them the other days, as they follow, intermitting that of the second Sunday, till it cometh in its course of that year.

King of Heaven? Think how incomparable is the beauty of this your Spouse. "Thou art beautiful above the sons of men"—Ps. xliv. 3—how great His nobility, dignity, glory, riches, wisdom, and power, that you may be the more inflamed with His love.

Consider 3.—Marriage is nothing else but a mutual contract between two, of living together as one, with communication of goods and fortunes. Wherefore, see you do not any more forsake Him by sin, though it were to gain the whole world. Besides, communicate freely with Him, and give Him up whatsoever you have. Adorn, therefore, and set out yourself in the best manner you are able, against the time of your meeting; and like a good spouse, as the Apostle admonisheth, in all things study how you may please your husband.—1 Cor. vii. 34.

MONDAY.

THE VIRGIN'S PURIFICATION.—Luke ii. 22.

Consider 1.—The Blessed Virgin, having retired herself forty days after her child-birth, goeth up to Jerusalem together with the Blessed Infant and St. Joseph, in compliance with a double law, of her own purification, and her Son's presentation. This law concerned not her, who conceived by the Holy Ghost, not by man; yet she would submit herself unto it. 1. To imitate her blessed Son, who would be subject to the law of circumcision. 2. Not to give offence, or scandal to the Jews, that knew nothing of the mystery wrought in her. 3. To conform herself, in what was lawful to others of her sex, and not to appear singular. 4. To be exemplary in works of greater perfection. Note each particular, and seek to make your benefit thereof.

Consider 2.—The admirable virtues she exercised in this action. 1. Her heroic obedience, exactly fulfilling whatsoever the law required of others; not pretending any exemption, privileges, or dispensation; nor using interpretations, even in that wherein she might lawfully have used them. O that you were so, even in things that you are obliged to. 2. Her profound humility in concealing the mysterious conception and birth of her Son, and sustaining the repute

of being unclean. Be ashamed of your own pride, in seeking to be accounted holy and without blame, whereas you are but a miserable sinner.

Consider 3.—Her incomparable purity, wherein although she excelled all creatures, yet through the desire she had of becoming still more and more pure, would not omit that ceremonial purification, which the law required in others. Learn, hence, to go on continually increasing in purity of body and mind, though you may seem to yourself ever so free from sin and imperfection. Ponder, lastly, her singular devotion in hastening to the temple to offer up solemnly to the Eternal Father both His and her only Son. Her "soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord."—Ps. lxxxiii. 3. Observe and imitate, as often as you go to Mass, to make the same offering.

TUESDAY.

OUR LORD'S PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE.

"They carried Him into Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord." Consider 1.—This presentation; and 1. in relation to the Blessed Virgin; what acts of virtue she exercised therein, as of faith, adoration, devotion, thanksgiving towards God, and of charity towards men, for whom she offered her only Son. 2. In relation to the Divine Infant: how He rejoiced that the hour was come, which He had so much longed for, wherein He was publicly to be presented to His Eternal Father, as a living sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, and for yours in particular. Think with what zeal for His Father's glory, and man's salvation, He also offered Himself. 3. In relation to the Eternal Father, how acceptable this action was unto Him. If at the offering of Noe and others, "The Lord smelled a sweet savour"—Gen. viii. 21,—how much more at this oblation of His beloved Son, made also by Himself, and in the arms of His blessed mother.

Consider 2.—"And to offer a sacrifice, etc., a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons."—Luke ii. 24. "One for a holocaust (saith the law), and another for sin."—Levit. xii. 8. Where observe, how the virgin disdained not to be reputed poor and a sinner, (that being the sacrifice

ordained by the law for such as were not able to offer a lamb.) Be ashamed to disown either, or to think much to be ranked among them. Ponder what matter of gifts God requireth, turtles, pigeons, lambs; by the turtle, is signified mourning and penance; by the pigeon, simplicity; by the lamb, mildness. With these virtues, therefore, present yourself, that so your offering may be acceptable to Him.

Consider 3.—Christ's parents, to fulfil the law,—Exod. xiii. 13; Levit. xxvii. 6,—redeemed their Son with five sicles, although the evangelists mention it not. Ponder 1. Who buyeth? His blessed mother; not to keep Him for herself, but to nurse and keep Him up for us. 2. Of whom doth she buy Him? Of His Eternal Father, to whom He had lately been presented. Thus, He would have His Son to be ours by a double title; first, by gift in incarnation, and now again by sale. Oh, that you were so liberal of yourself to God! What is the price? Five sicles, or pieces of silver. Think at how easy a rate you may make God your own; and withal, how inexcusable you are, in refusing to bestow those pains and labour for Him, which you do for the vanities of the world.

WEDNESDAY.

WHAT PASSED WITH SIMEON AND OTHERS.—Luke ii. 25.

PART I.

Consider 1.—"And behold there was a man in Jerusalem," etc. Here is described the sanctity of those that gave testimony of Christ, for there is nothing of greater credit or authority than innocency of life. 1. He was "just and devout," careful not to offend God in the least, for "he that feareth God, neglecteth nothing."—Eccles. vii. 19. 2. He was "waiting for the consolation of Israel," by ardent desires, and prayers poured forth with a great and holy confidence. 3. "And the Holy Ghost was in him," inspiring him after a special manner to fix his thoughts and desires upon these heavenly things, not on the terrene and vain objects of this world. Such ought to be all those that have consecrated themselves to God, "expecting" not earthly things, but (as the apostle saith) "the blessed hope and

coming of the glory of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ."—Tit. ii. 13.

Consider 2.—"And he came by the Spirit into the temple." Ponder the difference of them that frequent the Church; some coming in spirit, others through custom. See how he came presently to know the Saviour of the world, so much desired and longed for by the ancient patriarchs and prophets. See how he runneth to the mother, taketh the blessed Infant into his arms, and there entertains Him with holy kisses and embracings. O what flames of love would kindle it to have the Son of God so near! Imitate these affections as often as you receive the Holy Eucharist, and learn to go in spirit to the Church, and not through mere custom.

Consider 3.—How well the blessed Infant did recompense the long expectation of this holy man, not only favouring him with His corporal presence, and that in his arms, but also working interiorly in his soul admirable effects of His divine grace, and replenishing him with heavenly comfort, so plentifully as to make him bid adieu to all earthly things, and to life itself, breaking forth into that sweet canticle: "Now Thou dost dismiss Thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace; because my eyes have seen Thy salvation." Oh! that you could likewise bid farewell to all worldly desires, and say with the apostle, "I have a desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ."—Phil. i. 23.

THURSDAY.

WHAT PASSED WITH SIMEON AND OTHERS.—Luke ii. 3.

PART II.

Consider 1.—What Simeon said to Christ, "Behold this infant is set for the fall, and for the resurrection of many in Israel." Christ will, indeed, prove to be the ruin both of the unbelievers and of those that work not according to their belief, but withal a resurrection and everlasting life to the just. Think how you would have Him be to you, and take notice how even the most holy things will turn to our ruin and damnation, if we make ill use of them. Reflect, therefore, upon yourself, and examine what use you make of

God's benefits, and of the means bestowed upon you to work your salvation.

Consider 2.—"And for a sign which shall be contradicted." O wonder! He was the increated wisdom of God, "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge"—Colos. ii. 3,—and yet He was contradicted by many. His words and actions were commonly calumniated and condemned; and thou, silly man that thou art, dost thou wonder and repine that men sometimes contradict thee, and reprove thy words and actions? Learn to suffer patiently. If you desire to be Christ's disciple, you must be content to be as a mark for others to aim at in contradiction. For "the disciple is not above the master." —Matt. x. 24.

Consider 3.—What the holy man said to the Blessed Virgin: "And thy own soul shall a sword pierce," etc. Ponder how God mixeth sorrow with gladness, and amidst those excessive joys wherewith her soul must necessarily be filled, to see her Son honoured in that solemn manner, He puts her in mind of her future sorrows. Ponder the singular modesty of the Virgin, and withal her resignation, wherewith she accepted at the hands of God the piercing sword. Imitate her example, and learn not to be overjoyed in time of consolation, but to think then of the desolation that may ensue. "In the day of good things (saith Ecclesiasticus) be not unmindful of evil."

FRIDAY.

WHAT PASSED WITH ANNA AND OTHERS.—Luke ii. 36.

PART I.

Consider 1.—In this mystery are proposed unto us the virtues of this saint for our imitation. After seven years of a married life, she lived continually in the temple, till the fourscore and fourth year of her age, "by fastings and prayers, serving night and day." Ponder her great love of chastity, her continual exercise of prayer and mortification, and constant perseverance of so many years in the service of God. Compare these virtues with your inconstancy and tepidity, "that you may know what is lacking to you."

Consider 2.—"And she at the same hour coming in, confessed to the Lord."—Luke ii. 38. Ponder here, 1. God's sweet providence, in inspiring her to come so opportunely, and withal revealing unto her the mystery of His Incarnation. 2. Her concurrence with the divine inspiration, not letting slip one moment of the hour that was allotted her for the obtaining of so great a blessing. Who knoweth whether this be not the hour wherein God intends you some special favour, if you would make right use of it? Learn hence to be ready at all hours, and let not any slip from you. You may lose many by neglecting one.

Consider 3.—Many others there were at that time in the temple, who both saw and heard what passed, yet these two alone had their eyes open to know Him, for this blessed Infant, in the exterior, made no show of anything that was singular, or above other children. Learn hence to conceal what is in you, and withal, not to judge of others by their outside. Learn also that among so many that come to the holy Eucharist, those alone do truly know Him, and taste His sweetness, who come in spirit and devotion to the church, and are rightly disposed. Lastly, learn hence that "many are called, but few chosen."—Matt. xx. 16. "Labour the more (as St. Peter admonisheth), that by good works you may make sure your calling and election."—2 Pet. i. 10.

SATURDAY.

WHAT PASSED WITH ANNA AND OTHERS.—Luke ii. 38.

PART II.

Consider 1.—The interior acts of virtue this holy woman exercised when she beheld the Blessed Infant. Her faith, hope, love, joy, and congratulation with herself, perfect resignation, etc. Observe and imitate, as often as you come to the same, Christ in the Holy Eucharist. If you believe, where is your humility, reverence, and devotion? If you hope in Him, why do you afflict yourself on account of crosses and adversities? If you love Him, why do you set your affections upon creatures? If your joy be in Him, why do you seek content and satisfaction from earthly comforts? If, lastly, you have resigned yourself to Him,

why do you so often recall yourself, and seek your own will?

Consider 2.—Out of the vehemency of her affection and zeal, she brake forth into the praises of God. "She confessed to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all," etc., professing Him to be the Messias of the world, extolling His mercies, admiring His humility, inviting all to acknowledge, reverence, and love Him, as their Lord and Saviour. O how true is that, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."—Matt. xii. 34. The reason why you are so dumb in the praises of God is, because you are cold and tepid in affection. Learn of this holy woman to speak freely of God, and of heavenly things in your private discourses and conversations with others. Be not content to enjoy God alone, but endeavour to bring others to Him, both by word and example.

Consider 3.—"And His father and mother were wondering at these things, which were spoken concerning Him." They admired the Divine Providence in revealing these sublime mysteries to a few only, and those but obscure persons, rather than to the great and wise men of the world. "And after that they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned." Learn by this their example, exactly to accomplish the will of God in all, even the least things. Accompany them home, observe their religious comportment on the way; see how they, being now returned to Bethlehem, apply themselves, each in their respective duties, to tend and serve the divine Infant.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the Physician of your Soul.

"Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved."—*Jer.* xvii. 14.

CONSIDER 1.—What is read this day in the gospel, to wit, that Christ healed the leper, and after that the centurion's servant, and that He is the general physician of the souls

of all who therefore came into the world, "That I should heal (saith He) the contrite of heart."—Isa. lxi. 1. And while He was on earth, wheresoever He came, "Virtue went out from Him, and healed all."—Luke vi. 19.

Consider 2.—How many diseases man is subject to. "Our fever (saith St. Ambrose) is covetousness; our fever is sensuality; our fever is rage and anger," etc.—Mart. 8. So many are our diseases, as we have vices. Ponder what concern and danger they are of, as bringing with them everlasting death; how hard to be cured, being of the nature, not of outward diseases, that easily discover themselves, but of inward malignities that lie concealed from the patient himself, and are, in a manner, rooted in the very substance of the soul. What a happiness were it to be cured of all those, and to have a physician at hand who knows how to apply sovereign remedies against them.

Consider 3.—We ought to put great trust in this our heavenly physician. 1. Because He is most skilful and knows all things; and that He might have a more experimental knowledge of our necessities, "He hath borne our infirmities, and carried our sorrows."—Isa. liii. 4. 2. Because He is most compassionate, even thirsting after our health and salvation; and therefore, of His own accord, asked that man in the gospel, "Wilt thou be made whole?"—John v. 6. 3. To the end He might the more effectually cure us, He hath made a most admirable balsam of His most precious body and blood, for us to take as a most sovereign remedy. Cast yourself therefore at His feet, and say with the prophet: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak."—Ps. vi. 2. Dispose yourself to obey whatsoever this divine physician shall prescribe.

MONDAY.

CHRIST'S FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.—Matt. ii. 13.

PART I.

Consider 1.—How different are the ways of God from those of men. Christ, as soon as born, is sent into banishment. God could have taken Herod away, or easily have appeased His wrath, or have rendered His Son invisible; but He would have Him flee. Think how derogatory this was to the dignity of the Son of God, how full of incon-

venience. Thus God dealeth with those whom He loveth most. Are you greater or better than the Son of God? Why, then, do you complain when He permits you to suffer some hardship? Take these as tokens of His love, and you will bear them the better, and that with joy and thanks.

Consider 2.—God would not have Him go to the sages, where He would have been held in honour and veneration, and could have wanted nothing; but into Egypt, a barbarous nation, and ever unfriendly to the Israelites, far from home, from His kindred or acquaintance. Thus did He take from His Son, during His infancy, all manner of comfort, help and relief, which He might otherwise have had from His friends. Why do you so much seek to be respected and served by all, and think much if you suffer any inconveniency? If you did love and serve Christ in earnest, you would rather rejoice, and think it honour enough to be neglected, despised, and afflicted with and for Him. "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his Lord."—Matt. ix. 25.

Consider 3.—Christ, as He would be born far from home, so would He be banished far from His own country, 1. That we should both own and carry ourselves as strangers and exiled persons, not as citizens or natives of this world, knowing that "we have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come."—Heb. xiii. 14. That those who were afterwards to suffer banishment for His sake, might find comfort in His example. Learn willingly for the love of Christ, to be exiled from your native country and friends; for true is that saying, "A man of resolution makes every country his own."

TUESDAY.

CHRIST'S FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.—PART II.

Consider 1.—"Behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph, saying: Arise, and take the Child and His mother, and fly into Egypt."—Matt. ii. 13. Ponder the particulars: 1. The angel commandeth in the name of God, who is our supreme Lord. 2. He delivereth it not to the Virgin, though the more worthy, but to Joseph, as head of

the family. Thus God doth first illuminate superiors by Himself, then us by them. 3. He "appeareth in sleep;" recommending thereby God's care of us who, while we are asleep, is watching for our good. 4. He bids him "take the Child and His mother," without care of anything else. O that Jesus and Mary were your only care and love! 5. He assigneth him the place he is to go to. Learn hence not to be your own chooser, but to take all from the hand of God; place, employment, prosperity, adversity, etc.

Consider 2.—Those words of the angel, "Be there until I shall tell thee." He could have told him determinately till such, or such a time, but God would not have them know it, that they might the more depend on His providence. Be not in your affairs solicitous for the future, as to time, place, and other circumstances; learn to depend in all things on the Divine Providence, for "the steps of man are guided by the Lord"—Prov. xx. 24,—as the wise man saith. And, "He hath given His angels charge of thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."—Ps. xc. 11. Follow this conduct, not your own ways, and you will ever live in security.

Consider 3.—"Who arose, and took the child, and His mother by night," etc. Ponder here St. Joseph's perfect obedience. 1. In submitting his judgment, whereas there wanted not many things which might have objected against so sudden a departure. 2. In readily conforming his will, notwithstanding the many difficulties that presented themselves. 3. In his prompt and exact execution, in every particular, rising that very time of night, breaking his sleep and rest, and leaving all that he had, uncertain of returning any more. 4. In performing all this with great cheerfulness, knowing he did therein the will of God. Compare and conform your obedience in all things to this perfect example.

WEDNESDAY.

CHRIST'S FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.—PART III.

"And retired into Egypt."—Matt. ii. 14. Consider 1. —How, without delay, they put themselves upon their journey. Ponder the tender affection of the mother, and compassion towards her child, beginning even now from

His infancy to train Himself up to hardships; and how, notwithstanding, she resigneth herself to the will of God. Think also how the Divine Infant freely offereth Himself to His Eternal Father, even in these early days, for banishment, labours, and miseries. He rejoiceth to go into Egypt to sanctify it with His divine presence, and to destroy the idols that were in it. "Behold the Lord, etc., will enter into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at His presence."—Isa. xix. 1. Beseech Him likewise to sanctify you in the Holy Eucharist, and to destroy in you the idols of your vicious affections.

Consider 2.—What they do, and suffer in the way. Offer yourself as companion, observe their religious comportment, their pious discourses, their interior recollection with God. See with what patience they endure, and overcome the many difficulties of a very long and troublesome journey, of about two hundred and seventy miles. Think what they suffer in the inns and other places, being poor and strangers in the country. Have compassion on them, and be confounded for being so nice, and seeking so much your own ease and satisfaction in meat, drink, and lodging, etc.

Consider 3.—How being come into Egypt, they took up their habitation for seven or eight years, between Heliopolis and Cairo. Think what manner of life they led all that time. 1. Their religious observance towards God and His laws, as much as the condition of banishment in a heathenish country would permit. 2. Their charity and union among themselves. 3. Their extreme poverty, having nothing but what they got by the labour of their hands to maintain themselves and the child. 4. Their patience in the ill-usages of the Egyptians. 5. The edification they gave to their neighbours, and zeal in endeavouring their conversion, and that probably not without success in many. Ponder everything attentively, and gather something for yourself.

THURSDAY.

THE MURDER OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS.

Consider 1.—"Then Herod, perceiving that he was deluded by the wise men, was exceeding angry, and sending, killed all the men-children."—Matt. ii. 16. Observe the barbarous cruelty, and into what enormities ambition doth plunge a man; that you may conceive the greater hatred against it. But let the wicked rage and foam as they please, let them devise practices against our Lord and His saints: "He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh at them: and the Lord shall deride them"—Ps. ii. 4,—as He did Herod, and frustrated his designs. Learn therefore to confide in our Lord.

Consider 2.—The cruelty of the officers, exceeding even that of the tyrant. See how readily, and to the full they execute their prince's command, murdering as many as they could find all about Bethlehem. Be confounded in yourself, for being so remiss in doing good. Imagine what a heart-breaking this must needs prove to these children's mothers. See that your concern and grief be no less, as often as Christ is taken from you by sin. Think how Christ, though afar off, beholdeth all these things with compassion, but withal rejoiceth at the infant's glory and crown in heaven.

Consider 3.—The goodness of God who knoweth how to draw out of the wickedness of man, and produce a honeycomb out of the lion's jaw.—Judges xiv. 8. He permitted, therefore, this slaughter, that so He might raise the infants to the crown of martyrdom. Commit yourself, and all you have, to God, for He knows better how to dispose all things than you yourself. With that you also may come to shed your blood for Him, but first imitate the innocence of these saints by purity of life, that you may be "without spot, before the throne of God."—Apoc. xiv. 5.

FRIDAY.

CHRIST'S RETURN OUT OF EGYPT TO NAZARETH.

Consider 1.—"When Herod was dead, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in sleep to Joseph in Egypt, saying: Arise, and take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel."—Matt. ii. 19, 20. Who being afterwards in doubt where to dwell, for fear of Archelaus, was admonished again, to go into Galilee. Observe here, 1. How short is the prosperity of the wicked in this life, and how soon it is changed into the everlasting miseries of the next. 2. What a special care and providence God had of the just, taking them in due time out of the afflictions he permitted them to fall into, for their greater good; and directing them in all their ways. Therefore, "Come ye to Him, and be enlightened, and your faces shall not be confounded."—Ps. xxxiii. 6.

Consider 2.—"And coming, He dwelt in a city called Nazareth." Imagine the joy and congratulations of their friends and kindred on their return, and for the increase of a son; admire this singular modesty, in concealing the admirable mysteries which God had wrought in them, leaving it to Him to reveal them in due time. Observe how Christ, from Nazareth, was called a Nazarite; and Nazareth signifieth a flower; and Christ saith of Himself in the Canticles, "I am the flower of the field"—Cant. ii. 1,—not of the garden; that is, born of mean, not of noble or wealthy parents; "and the lily of the valleys," not of the mountains; that is, springing forth of the hearts of the humble, not of the proud and high-minded. Be you therefore a valley, that is, humble; that the pure lily of chastity may bud forth in your heart, and yourself flourish for ever in the presence and company of your Lord.

Consider 3.—Many are the followers of Jesus, the Nazarite, but few of the Crucified; they willingly bear Him company in a prosperous and flourishing condition, but leave Him in adversity; they would be sharers of His kingdom, not of His passion; of His crown, not of His cross. But you, my soul, so follow the Nazarite, as to run

after the sweet odour of His virtues; and follow Him also crucified, for that by His cross and not otherwise, you must pass to His crown.

SATURDAY.

A SUMMARY OF THE VIRTUES WHICH CHRIST EXERCISED IN HIS INFANCY.

Having considered the mysteries of Christ's infancy, it will not be amiss to cast a look back, and reflect upon the admirable examples of virtue which He gave us therein.

1.—Of contempt of the world. He would be born secretly in the night, without pomp or attendants, unknown to all. Being born, He would be visited by none of His country, but by poor simple shepherds; in the temple He chose to be manifested by two mean and obscure persons, Simeon and Anna; and lived afterwards obscurely in banishment, refusing and contemning all the enjoyments of this world.

2.—Of humility. From the God of infinite majesty He became a helpless infant in His birth; an outcast in Bethlehem; a companion of beasts in a stable; a reputed sinner in His circumcision; a weak worm and fugitive in His flight into Egypt. "I am a worm, and no man: the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people."—Ps. xxi. 7.

3.—Of poverty. For you He was made poor, whereas He was rich—2 Cor. viii. 9,—scarce admitting necessaries of life, and in what He had, ever choosing the meanest and worst: a stable for His house, a manger for His cradle, straw for His bed, coarse swaddling clothes for His garments, an humble virgin for His mother, a poor carpenter for His reputed father. Make use of all this by imitation. "That through His poverty you might be rich."—2 Cor. viii. 9.

4.—Of obedience. "He humbled Himself, becoming obedient," etc.—Phil. ii. 8. His birth in Bethlehem was an actual exercise of obedience to Cæsar's edict, though to His extreme great inconvenience. He would observe the general laws of circumcision, presentation, etc., though unconcerned therein, and in all things obeyed His parents.

5.—Of patience. Although by right of His divinity He was impassible, and by merit of His innocence unpunishable, yet would He in that tender age suffer cold, hunger, infirmity, and want, the knife and wound of circumcision, the hardships of travelling, the afflictions of banishment, besides the other common miseries of infancy, whereof He was most sensible, as having the perfect use of reason.

6.—Of love and charity, both towards God and man, directing all that He did and suffered to His honour, and our good; He shed tears and blood also in His circumcision, not for Himself, as other children, but to bewail the offence to God, and our sins. He took upon Him our infirmities and miseries, not by constraint or necessity, but out of pure love, both to satisfy for us, and to teach us by His own example, all manner of virtue. Return, therefore, love for love. Learn to contemn the world, to be humble and obedient, to suffer willingly want and hardships, and all this for the love of God and your neighbour.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the peace and tranquillity of the Soul.

"Save me, O God: for the waters are come in even unto my soul."
Ps. lxviii. 1.

CONSIDER 1.—What is read to-day in the gospel—Matt. viii. 23. How Christ allayed the tempest at sea, etc. Our soul is in this life as in a tumultuous sea, tossed with many storms and tempests, partly from the raging winds of temptation, raised by the malignant spirits, partly also from the swelling waves of our own passions and concupiscences, which, unless they be kept under, will certainly sink us to the bottom of perdition. "The wicked (saith the prophet) are like the raging sea, which cannot rest," etc.—Isa. lvii. 20. Oh, how many famous men, being swallowed up in it, are sunk to the bottom like a stone!—Exod. xv. 5.

Consider 2.—There is no other remedy against these tempests than the protection of God. "Thou rulest the power of the sea: and appeasest the motion of the waves thereof."—Ps. lxxxviii. 10. For He is the peace and tranquillity of the soul, appeasing its turbulent motions at His pleasure; for to-day "He commanded the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm."—Matt. viii. 26. The like He will do to you at His coming in the Holy Eucharist if you be rightly disposed.

Consider 3.—God often permitted us to be tossed by the waves of troubles and temptations, while he seemeth to sleep, to try our constancy, and increase our crown of glory. Besides, He is much pleased with the confidence we put in Him in such like dangers, whence He reprehended St. Peter for his diffidence, saying, "O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?"—Matt. xiv. 31. See, therefore, with what passions you are most disordered; and, coming with great confidence in the Holy Eucharist, cry out with the apostles, "Lord, save us, we perish!"—Matt. viii. 25,—or, with David, "Let not the tempest of water drown me, nor the deep swallow me up."—Ps. lxviii. 16.

MONDAY.

CHRIST GOING UP TO THE TEMPLE, ETC.—PART I.

Consider 1.—It was a law among the Jews that all of the male kind should thrice in the year appear before our Lord in Jerusalem. St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin also went: he, in obedience to the law; she, out of devotion to the house of God. Christ went up also with them, both to glorify His Eternal Father, and to give solemn thanks for all benefits received, as well general as particular, for which end, or cause, that law was instituted. Learn willingly to visit the house of God, as often as you can, and to observe exactly the laws, or rules, of the place where you live.

Consider 2.—"His parents went every year to Jerusalem, etc., according to the custom of the feast;" to teach you constancy and perseverance in good works. Besides, although they had a good custom of going, yet they did it not merely for custom sake, but with devotion and spirit;

which we ought greatly to observe in all matters of religion, and chiefly in frequenting the holy sacraments.

Consider 3.—"When they returned, the Child Jesus remained in Jerusalem." Our blessed Lord would leave His parents for a time, to give us an example of renouncing flesh and blood, where the service and honour of God is concerned. Whence, afterwards He pronounced, "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me."—Matt. x. 37. All carnal friends are to be left for God; neither are they to be consulted withal in this point, much less to be heard or followed, if they prove contrary. Hence, that renowned saying of St. Jerome: "Trample over your father, trample over your mother, and with dry cheeks fly away to the standard of the cross."—Hieron. apud Bern. ep. 351.

TUESDAY.

CHRIST'S GOING UP TO THE TEMPLE, ETC.—PART II.

Consider 1.—What Christ did those three days—Bern. tom. 1. It is probable He remained all that time in the temple, wholly taken up with divine things, employing Himself in prayer, and conversing with the doctors. He lay upon the ground, lived without any other food than what was very sparing, and that, perhaps, got by begging (as some are of opinion), out of His great love for poverty, so as to fulfil that of the prophet, "I am a beggar and poor: the Lord is careful for me."—Ps. xxxix. 18.

Consider 2.—How He behaved himself among the doctors. Ponder 1. The modesty of His countenance, words, and actions, wherewith the doctors were so much taken, as to admit Him into their company and conversation. 2. His humility, in asking questions, and hearing their answers as a learner, not as a teacher, although He were the wisdom of God Himself. 3. His prudence, in the questions and answers He made, even to the astonishment of them all. 4. His zeal, wherewith He acted purely for the glory of God, not out of vain ostentation. How contrary is the conduct of most scholars now-a-days, who, with pride and arrogance, boast of, and foolishly blab out what they know. See whether ye be one of them.

Consider 3.—How His good parents grieve for the loss

of their Son. Ponder 1. Their patience, for their sorrow was such that it disturbed not the quiet and peace of their minds. 2. Their humility, in ascribing it to their own fault, whereas there was none on their part. 3. Their care in seeking after Him with sorrow and love. 4. The prayer they made that whole night, begging earnestly of God the return of the child. It often happeneth that we lose Christ in the day-time of prosperity or business, and that we come not to take notice of it till the night of tribulation or recollection. Beg of your Lord not to leave you; say with the prophet, "Forsake me not, O Lord my God, do not Thou depart from me."—Ps. xxxvii. 22.

WEDNESDAY.

CHRIST IS SOUGHT FOR BY HIS PARENTS.

Consider 1.—The great care of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph in seeking after their Son, who appeared not all that first night of their journey. "They returned into Jerusalem seeking Him"—Luke ii. 45;—leaving no place either in the way or city unsearched, in the hope they might find Him out, whom their hearts loved so entirely. The Blessed Virgin might probably say that of the Canticles, "Show me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou liest in the mid-day"—Cant. i. 6, —or, heat or height of my affliction. See with what fervour you ought to seek your Lord, as often as you have lost either His personal presence by mortal sin, or His most gracious familiarity by lukewarmness.

Consider 2.—Christ could not be found among His kindred and acquaintance, that you might learn to quit yourself of all inordinate affection towards your kindred, country, and friends, if you desire to enjoy the company of Jesus. For, as St. Bernard elegantly saith, "How shall I find You (good Jesus) among my kindred, who could not be found among Your own?"

Consider 3.—Neither yet is He found in some pleasant field, nor in the market-place, nor in the common inn. Nor did the spouse in the Canticles find her beloved in the bed of ease and pleasures, nor "in the streets and high-ways" of distractions. He was found at last in the temple

amongst the doctors. Seek ye our Lord, therefore, in the church, and by prayer; and if you find Him not the first or second night, persevere still in seeking Him; for as the wise man saith of wisdom, "He is easily seen by them that love Him, and is found by them that seek Him."—Wisd. vi. 13.

THURSDAY.

CHRIST IS FOUND BY HIS PARENTS.

Consider 1.—"And it came to pass, that after three days they found Him in the temple." Behold, the Blessed Virgin entering the Temple, and think with what joy her very bowels were filled, when she saw her Son, who was the very light of her eyes; she did not thrust herself into the assembly, nor vainly boast herself as the mother of such a Son, but silently and modestly waited the end. Do you the like on such occasions.

Consider 2.—The mother's words: "Son, why hast Thou done so to us?" This was not a complaint, but a loving expression of her grief, such as was that of Christ to His Father, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"—Matt. xxvii. 46. "Behold Thy father and I," etc.—Luke ii. 48. She honoured her spouse in calling him father, whereas, he was but foster-father to the child; she prefers him to herself, by naming him in the first place, that you might learn to prefer others to yourself. "Sorrowing did seek Thee." And therefore they found Him: for "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."—Ps. cxxv. 5.

Consider 3.—The Child's answer: "Did you not know, that I must be about My Father's business?" A true golden sentence, and worthy to be ever remembered; teaching you to prefer the service of God to other affairs or concerns whatsoever. Examine yourself, whether you be wholly taken up in those things that are of your Heavenly Father, or rather in toys, in things of this world, in self-concerns, in affairs opposite to heaven, and contrary to your vocation.

FRIDAY.

CHRIST'S RETURN TO NAZARETH.—PART I.

Consider His Obedience to His Parents.

Consider 1.—Christ, having now performed the will of His Eternal Father, notwithstanding His great love of solitude, prayer, and the immediate worship of God in the temple, "Went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and was subject to them"—Luke ii. 51;—to teach us by His own example, that God expecteth not the highest and most spiritual actions from all, and at all times, but requireth rather that we condescend to others, and conform our life in the exterior to the condition of our calling, performing the proper and ordinary actions thereof with perfection. Think how Christ related to His blessed mother, by the way, what passed between Him and the doctors. "And His mother kept all these words in her heart." Do you likewise keep the word of God in your heart, that it may keep you.

Consider 2.—The admirable example of obedience which Christ vouchsafed to give, and declare in these words: "And was subject to them." Ponder with St. Bernard: "Who? to whom? God to men; God to whom the angels are subject, whom the principalities and powers obey, was subject to Mary," etc. And in what things? In all, even in the meanest and vilest offices. "The Word and Wisdom of God despised not a carpenter and a woman."

Consider 3.—With what good reason the same Saint crieth out, "Learn, O man, to obey: earth, learn to be subject; learn, dust, to submit. Be ashamed, proud ashes; God humbleth Himself to men, and do you exalt yourself? God submits Himself to men, and do you seek to domineer, and prefer yourself before your Maker? If, being man yourself, you scorn to follow the example of man, surely it will not be beneath you to follow your Creator."

SATURDAY.

CHRIST'S OBEDIENCE TO HIS PARENTS.—PART II.

Consider 1.—That you may be the more excited to imitate this admirable example of obedience in Christ, towards superiors, governors, and directors, under whom God hath already, or shall hereafter place you; consider the many advantages that accompany obedience. And first, nothing more acceptable can be offered to God. God, indeed, is appeased with victims and sacrifices, as the chief act of religion and worship that man can exercise; and yet He assureth us, that obedience is more grateful unto Him. "Obedience is better than sacrifices (saith He by His Prophet), and to hearken rather than to offer the fat of rams."—1 Kings xv. 22. "And with good reason (saith St. Gregory), for that in sacrifice the flesh of another, but by obedience, our own will is killed, and the whole man offered in sacrifice."

Consider 2.—There is no safer way to heaven; for, as the Saints teach us, there is nothing more dangerous in a spiritual life, than to be one's own guide, and to follow our own judgment; whence St. Bernard saith excellently well: "He that is his own master hath a fool for his scholar;" for (as Solomon saith), "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that is wise hearkeneth unto counsels."—Prov. xii. 15.

Consider 3.—In this one virtue are included all others; whence by the holy Father it is called the mother and guardian of other virtues; for he that is obedient is also humble, patient, meek, charitable, continent, and master of himself; for, as the wise man saith, "an obedient man shall speak victory."—Prov. Procure, therefore, to be well affected to this virtue, and to exercise it when an occasion occurs, in imitation of Christ.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the Good Seed of our Soul.

"I WILL put my spirit in the midst of you; and I will cause you to walk in My commandments."—Ezech. xxxvi. 27. Consider 1.—What is said to-day in the Gospel: "The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field."—Matt. xiii. 24. Ponder, therefore, how your soul is a field, capable both of good and bad seed; and that God doth cast into it many good seeds of holy inspirations and pious affections, by good books, preachers, directors, etc. But the choicest seed of all is His own precious body, which He soweth in your soul by the Eucharist; for this is "the corn of the elect"—Zach. ix. 17—and the seed that yieldeth the fruit of eternal life.

Consider 2.—The soil of your soul of itself is fruitless and barren, bringing forth nothing but thorns and briars, and subject to be overgrown with cockle, which, resembling the good seed of virtues, do fill up and deceive the soul with vain hopes of fruit, and in harvest time, that is, in the latter judgment, are cast into the fire. Cleanse, therefore, your soul carefully from the weeds and briars of vice, with the harrow of mortification; separate the cockle from the pure wheat, true virtue from that which is false and counterfeit, that the seed of the Heavenly Sower may not be choked up within you.

Consider 3.—How seriously you ought to labour, to the end that by means of such sowing, and frequent receiving the sacraments, you must yield corresponding fruit; lest, otherwise, the Heavenly Husbandman, provoked to indignation, condemn you to the fire. "For the earth (saith the Apostle), that drinketh in the rain which cometh often upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is tilled: receiveth blessing from God. But that which bringeth forth thorns and briars, is reprobate, and very near unto a curse, whose end is to be burnt."—Heb. vi. 7, 8.

MONDAY.

CHRIST'S GROWING IN AGE AND WISDOM.—PART I.

Consider 1.—"And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men."—Luke ii. 52. Christ from His first conception, had all fulness of grace, wisdom, and all manner of virtue; but He proceeded still forward in them, to the outward appearance, accommodating His actions and discourses suitably to His age; that you might learn to conform yourself to the time and place you are in, and to make continual progress in virtue.

Consider 2.—There are many ways of profiting and of failing in a spiritual life. First—some, after they have begun well, fall back through inconstancy; and these our Lord condemneth when He saith: "No man putteth his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God;" and biddeth us remember Lot's wife, who was turned into a pillar of salt, that others might be the wiser of her misfortune.

Consider 3.—Others, in their progress, grow remiss in fervour and use of those means whereby they might profit, and therefore are in danger of falling. To such Christ speaketh in the Apocalypse: "I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first charity."—Apoc. ii. 4. Others, again, begin and go on with a slow pace; and, although outwardly there appears no defect, yet, for the most part, there is real decay within. Finally, others, when they have once begun well, go on cheerfully, "in his heart, he hath disposed to ascend by steps"—Ps. lxxxiii. 6, —etc., from one virtue to another. See in what class you are, or would wish to be, and improve your pace in order to gain the prize.

TUESDAY.

CHRIST'S GROWING IN AGE AND WISDOM.—PART II.

Consider 1.—"Jesus advanced in wisdom and age, and grace with God and men"—Luke ii. 52,—saith the evangelist. We must, therefore, join both together, and avoid two extremes. Wherefore ponder, some there are whose

only care it is to carry a fair outside in the eyes of men, and little regard their own true interior profit in the sight of God, and their own conscience. So did the Pharisees, of whom Christ said: "They disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast; amen I say to you, they have received their reward."—Matt. vi. 16. See whether you do your actions so; for example, frequenting the sacraments, hearing Mass, and the like, through human respect, and that you might not seem indevout; and see you correct yourself.

Consider 2.—Others there are, on the contrary, who have no regard to the edification of their neighbour in what they do through fervour, having sometimes an over great and indiscreet "zeal of God, but not according to knowledge" —Rom. x. 2,—as the apostle saith. And these the same apostle admonisheth to be "providing good things not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of all men."—Rom. xii. 17.

Consider 3.—Lastly, others join both together, and that, according to the example of Christ, who said: "So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."—Matt. v. 16. Run over all your actions in particular, and see what you are wont to do to please men—what, again, to please God alone, though it be with the offence and disedification of others; and endeavour in all things to please God by a right intention, and to edify men by good example.

WEDNESDAY.

THE NECESSITY WHICH ALL HAVE OF IMPROVING IN VIRTUE.—PART I.

Consider 1.—All that are disciples of Christ must make continual progress in spirit. 1. Because not to go forward in the way of God, as the saints teach, is to go backward. For, as a boat cannot keep its pace in a rapid river, but must necessarily be carried downward by force of the stream, unless it be borne upward by means of oars; so, unless you go continually on, struggling with main force against the impulse of nature, you will certainly by force thereof be cast back. For, as St. Bernard saith, "Not to

gain, doubtless, is to lose ground"—Bern. Ep. xxxiv. 1—whence you will come to fall at last into the hands of your enemies, whom you desire to escape.

Consider 2.—Because such is the will of God, who will have us to be pure and holy in His sight, without spot or wrinkle. "Be you therefore perfect (saith Christ), as also your Heavenly Father is perfect."—Matt. v. 48. No man becometh eminent all on a sudden. Let every one, therefore, seek to perfect himself by degrees, that he may at last arrive at the summit of perfection.

Consider 3.—Because so it becometh a disciple of Christ to do. Whence St. Bernard elegantly saith: "The scholar that profiteth, is a glory to his master; whosoever, therefore, profits not in Christ's school, is unworthy of having Him for his master." What a shame would it be for one after seven years' study of philosophy and divinity, to have profited nothing, and to end his course no better scholar than he began. Much more ought you to be ashamed, if (which God forbid) you become worse, more remiss in prayer, more given to detraction, and a greater lover of yourself and your own ease and satisfaction, than when you first entered the school of virtue. Endeavour therefore, continually to improve yourself.

THURSDAY.

THE NECESSITY WHICH ALL HAVE OF IMPROVING IN VIRTUE.—PART II.

Consider 1.—The damages which the neglect of advancing in spirit doth bring; for first, it provoketh God to wrath. Therefore, in the Apocalypse, it is said to the bishop who had done many good works, but had left his first charity or fervour: "Be mindful from whence thou art fallen, etc., and do the first works. Or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place."—Apoc. ii. 5. God, perchance, hath designed you for a candlestick to give light to many. Take care, therefore, lest He remove you, for leaving your first charity, or fervour of devotion.

Consider 2.—How the aforesaid neglect depriveth us of great spiritual gains and rewards. "The slothful hand

hath wrought poverty"—Prov. x. 4—saith the wise man. Oh, what glory should we purchase in heaven, if we were always intent upon our spiritual profit, and took hold of all occasions of exercising virtue. Think what care and labour worldly merchants take to heap up money, which is to perish and moulder away; and you that are a merchant of heaven, neglect everlasting treasures, that are freely offered unto you.

Consider 3.—How this same neglect disposeth us to a final decay, and absolute breaking; for, of the servant that neglected to increase the stock or talent which he received, it was said: "Take ye away therefore the talent from him, etc., and the unprofitable servant cast ye out into the exterior darkness," etc.—Matt. xxv. 28, 30. Excite yourself to go on cheerfully; examine wherein you are wont to be most at a stand, and resolve to go through with courage. You have Christ for your leader; and for your reward, life everlasting.

FRIDAY.

CHRIST'S LIFE FROM THE TWELFTH TO THE THIRTIETH YEAR OF HIS AGE.—PART I.

Consider 1.—There is nothing extant, in the gospel, of Christ's life, from the twelfth to the thirtieth year of His age, but His obedience to His parents, and progress in virtue, as we have seen above, that you may make the greater account of them.

Consider 2.—It seemeth certain that Christ spent great part of that time in most high contemplation, and conversing with His Heavenly Father; for He that was afterwards to say of Mary Magdalen, that she had chosen the better part, with regard to her love and exercise of contemplation, must needs practise it Himself much more perfectly. And if David seven times a day did utter praise to God, and besides did rise at midnight to confess unto Him—Ps. cxviii. 164, 62—how much more Christ! Learn hence to give yourself to prayer, both for your own and your neighbours' good; and the frequent exercise thereof, and familiar conversation with God, are prime and necessary duties of a Christian.

Consider 3.—All that time Christ concealed His wisdom, so that He was deemed illiterate by all, whence afterwards they said in surprise, "How does this man know letters, having never learned?"—John vii. 15. Nay, they said that "He was become mad"—Mark iii. 21—for that He spake and wrought such strange things, as could not be expected from Him. Love to be unknown and of no account. "Believe me (said one) he hath lived well that hath lain well concealed." Be not too forward to exhibit your knowledge, though you take yourself to be more knowing than others. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, etc. But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me."—Jer. ix. 23, 24.

SATURDAY.

CHRIST'S LIFE FROM THE TWELFTH TO THE THIRTIETH YEAR OF HIS AGE.—PART II.

Consider 1.—As to the exterior manner of living, it is probable Christ our Lord practised the carpenter's trade also after St. Joseph's death, whence the Jews said of Him, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?"—Mark vi. 3. Imagine yourself, therefore, to see the Word of God and Lord of heaven handling His hatchet and plane; hewing, sawing, planing, and joining boards and other timber together; and with astonishment think who, what, where, etc. And how true that saying is, "His work is strange to Him."—Isa. xxviii. 21.

Consider 2.—Christ did this, first, through love of humility; for He that had taken upon Him other miseries of human nature, and had freely submitted Himself to the general malediction of toil and labour, wherein it was said to Adam, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."—Gen. iii. 19. Secondly, He did it to teach us, by His example, to shun idleness, the fountain and origin of all evil. See therefore you imitate Him; "For idleness (as the wise man saith) hath taught much evil."—Eccl. xxxiii. 29.

Consider 3.—What singular profit the Blessed Virgin made all that time, of so long and familiar conversation with her Son. Imagine what discourses they held one with

another, always of God, and of divine matters. See the Virgin standing in amaze, and beholding her Son; while He, through love of humility, performs all the humiliating offices of the house. "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God!"—Rom. xi. 33. Reflect upon every particular, and draw something out of all for your own benefit, etc.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as a Grain of Mustard-seed.

"The manna was like coriander seed."—Numb. xi. 7. Consider 1.—What is said to-day in the Gospel. "The kingdom of heaven is like to a mustard-seed," etc.—Matt. xiii. 31. To wit, that Christ was the mustard-seed, being, indeed, in outward appearance the least of all men, according to what He saith of Himself, "I am a worm, and no man"—Ps. xxi. 7;—but in virtue and efficacy greater than the angels themselves, and this is verified of Him most of all in the Eucharist. For, as to sense, what is of less show than a morsel of bread? but what more divine than the Holy Eucharist, as to the virtue and excellency it containeth within it.

Consider 2.—The many admirable virtues of this eucharistic grain. St. Thomas recounteth twelve, like to twelve fruits of the tree of life, of which we read in the Apocalypse.—Apoc. xxii. 2. 1. It driveth the devil from us. 2. It allayeth the heat of concupiscence. 3. It cleanseth the heart from sin. 4. It appeaseth the wrath of God. 5. It enlighteneth the understanding. 6. It inflameth the will. 7. It spiritually delighteth the memory. 8. It confirmeth the whole man in good. 9. It freeth from everlasting death. 10. It multiplieth our merits. 11. It bringeth us to paradise. 12. It raiseth the body to life. "O how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden from them that fear Thee."—Ps. xxx. 20.

Consider 3.—The mustard-seed discovereth not its virtue, unless it be bruised; but being well bruised or ground, it discloseth its heat and relish. In the same manner you must beforehand, by frequent meditation and serious consideration, beat upon, and bruise this divine seed of the Eucharist, otherwise you will not understand its virtue. Wherefore ruminate it well, pondering its secret and hidden virtues, and withal think what disposition it requireth in you; and then, to your great benefit, you will perceive what a sovereign heat and relish it hath.*

* If there be six weeks after Epiphany, then in the sixth repeat the meditations of the fifth. For, as it seldom happens that there are so many weeks, it seemeth needless to provide distinct meditations for the sixth week; or else make the meditations of the twenty-fourth week after Pentecost, on the parables, which that year are to be left out.

MEDITATIONS

ON

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD.

REMARKS.

THE holy Church, from Septuagesima, leaveth off her alleluias and canticles of joy, and disposeth us to mourning, and the memory of our Lord's Passion; for therefore is this Sunday called Septuagesima (saith Rupertus), because it beginneth the seventh week before Passion Sunday. Wherefore it hath seemed good hence to enter into the meditations of the Passion, wherein, though many affections may be exercised from the colloquies, as appeareth by what hath been said in the Preface, yet chiefly seven are noted by some, as most proper to this subject; which because we cannot, with our intended brevity, insert in every meditation, we have thought proper to glance over them slightly in this place. The affections are these: admiration, compassion, compunction, love, hope, thanksgiving, imitation.

1.—Admire, in each mystery, the dignity of the person that suffereth, and the greatness of the pains which He freely undergoeth: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra? Why then is Thy apparel red, and Thy garments like theirs that tread in the wine-press?"—Isa. lxiii. 1, 2.

2.—Condole with them, as children do with their parents in their adversities, brothers with one another, spouses with their beloved, servants with their masters; for Christ is as much to you as all these. "Who would grant me that I might die for thee, Absalom my son, my son Absalom?"—2 Kings xviii. 33.

3.—Be confounded and full of compunction, for your sins are the cause of all His sufferings; for, from whom would not that draw tears, which from Christ drew so much blood? "I know my iniquity, and my sin is always before me."—Ps. l. 5.

4.—Love Him that is so loving to you, and suffereth so much for your sake. "Lord," said St. Ambrose, "I owe more to your injuries for my redemption, than to your works for my creation."

5.—Hope, and promise yourself all good that your heart can wish for; He that hath given Himself, "How will He not also give us all things?"—Rom. viii. 32.

6.—Give Him everywhere thanks for having suffered so much for you. "The best keeper of benefits," said St. Chrysostom, "is a faithful memory of them, and constant profession of gratitude."

7.—Lastly, imitate your Lord and Captain in sufferings, reproaches, and injuries. Hath He suffered so much for you? and what have you, or what will you suffer for Him? "Christ suffered for us," saith St. Peter, "leaving you an example, that you should follow His steps."—1 Pet. ii. 21.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the Master of the Vineyard of your Soul.

CONSIDER 1.—"Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat the fruit of his apple-trees."—Cant. v. 1. Your soul, and the soul of every man, is a particular vineyard belonging to the great householder, of whom we read to-day in the gospel, etc.—Matt. xx. 1. Make account therefore that He will come to-day to visit your soul, His vineyard, to gather some fruit out of it. Imagine that He saith, with the spouse of the Canticles, "Let us get up early to the vineyards: let us see if the vineyard flourish, if the flowers be ready to bring forth fruits."—Cant. vii. 12.

Consider 2.—This divine householder hath omitted nothing on His part, that might make you a fruitless vineyard: "I planted thee," saith He by His prophet, "a chosen vineyard, all true seed," etc.—Jer. ii. 21. He hath sowed within you many seeds of true piety; He

hath hedged you in with holy laws, He hath provided you with the benefits of the holy sacraments, as so many presses and conduits of His grace. Finally, "what is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard," saith He Himself, "that I have not done to it?"—Isa. v. 4, etc. Procure, therefore, to yield Him ripe fruit. See whether He may not say of your vineyard, "I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it hath brought forth wild grapes," that is, sour and unpleasant grapes; for then He will pour out upon it that heavy curse that followeth: "I will make it desolate: it shall not be pruned, and it shall not be digged; and briers and thorns shall come up: and I will command the clouds to rain no rain upon it;" which His infinite goodness avert.

Consider 3.—You must therefore husband your vineyard carefully against His coming; prune all superfluities by mortification; dig and dive deeply into your soul by profound knowledge of yourself; root out by contrary acts the briars of vicious habits; and by the tears of compunction water the dry affections of your heart. Lastly, let your "vineyard be before you"—Cant. viii. 12—by continually looking to it, and it "will bring forth its fruit in due season."—Ps. i. 3.

MONDAY.

CHRIST INVITETH ALL MEN TO CONTEMPLATE HIS PASSION.

Consider 1.—Christ with all reason doth complain that having suffered so many, and so great pains and torments for man, man should be so ungrateful as not to think of them. "I looked for one that would grieve together with Me, but there was none; and for one that would comfort Me, and I found none."—Ps. lxviii. 21. Therefore, I say, "The just perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart."—Isa. lvii. 1. Think what it is to consider one's heart, to wit, with compassion and compunction.

Consider 2.—We can do nothing more acceptable to Christ, than often meditate on His passion; for which cause He lovingly inviteth all unto it by His prophet: "O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any

sorrow like to My sorrow"—Lam. i. 12; and in another place: "Remember My poverty, etc., the wormwood, and the gall."—Lam. iii. 19. Think with yourself, if you had lost but an arm or a foot in defence of your friend, might you not justly expect that he should be ever mindful of the favour? And what is that to what Christ had suffered for you?

Consider 3.—Offer, therefore, yourself to Christ as an attentive spectator of His sufferings, and as a mindful and and grateful partaker of His benefits. Say, with the same prophet, "Remembering, I will be mindful, and my soul shall languish in me. Recording this thing in my heart, therefore I will hope." And with reason may you hope, seeing He suffered to the end, that He might be our Advocate, and that He might wash away our sins with His precious blood; finally, seeing that even upon the cross He granted salvation and His kingdom of heaven to the thief.

TUESDAY.

CHRIST'S PASSION IN GENERAL.

Who suffereth?

That you may be the better disposed to resolve the whole history of His Passion, consider, first, its general circumstances; and, in the first place, who is it that suffereth?

1.—He that suffereth is the Immaculate Lamb of God. "Who did no sin," as St. Peter saith, "neither was guile found in His mouth."—1 Pet. ii. 22. The Holy of Holies, who received the Divine Spirit beyond measure, and one whom His own crucifiers confessed to be just, and the Son of God.—Matt. xxvii. 54.

2.—He suffereth, who had bestowed Himself wholly for the good of others. "Doing good, and healing all that were oppressed with the devil."—Acts x. 38. Wherefore He did not only not deserve those sufferings, but, on the contrary, all respect and honour were due to Him; so that He might justly complain with, "They repaid Me evil for good."—Ps. xxxiii. 12. Learn to suffer evil at their hands, from whom you have deserved kindness and gratitude.

3.—He that suffereth is the great Lover of mankind, who is become all things to us, for He is our Father and our Brother; He is our Master, Physician, Spouse, Pastor, Creator, Redeemer, and Benefactor. If, therefore, the son ought to be sensible of his father's sufferings, the spouse of her husband, see that you have compassion on Him who is your Father, Spouse, and Redeemer; and bear His marks, if not in your flesh, as the apostle, at least in your heart and mind. Think what you may do or suffer, in return, for His sake.

WEDNESDAY.

CHRIST'S PASSION IN GENERAL.

How much He suffereth.

Consider 1.—He suffereth in all kinds. 1. In external goods; for He was despoiled of all things, stript of His clothes, and hanged naked on the cross before all the world. 2. In His honour, for He was reproached and slandered. 3. In fame, being variously traduced in matters belonging to every kind of virtue, held for a Samaritan, and for one possessed of the devil; a glutton and a lover of wine; a blasphemer and seducer. 4. In point of knowledge, He was esteemed as one without learning, a madman, and fool. 5. As for miracles, He was accounted an impostor and enchanter. 6. He suffered in His friends, being forsaken by them all.

Consider 2.—How much He suffered in His body. Go through all His senses. His eyes were defiled with spittle, and filled with blood falling down from His sacred head; they were also tormented to see the scornful gestures and mockeries of them that reviled Him. His ears were wounded with rough pulls and pinches, but much more with blasphemies against God, and unjust accusations brought against Himself. His smell disgusted with the stench of Calvary; His taste tormented with vehement thirst, and bitter drench with vinegar and gall. Lastly, the sense of feeling over all the parts of His body, by stripes, thorns, and nails; so that it was truly said of Him, "From the sole of the foot unto the top of the head, there is no soundness therein."—Isa. i. 6.

Consider 3.—And add to these the interior anguishes of His mind, as that of His agony in the garden; that other of His being left by His Father on the cross, and other such like. Be ashamed that you cannot so much as endure the cold of winter, or heat of summer, and much less suffer patiently some small sickness; wish that you may come to suffer anything, and die for Christ.

THURSDAY.

CHRIST'S PASSION IN GENERAL.

From whom He suffereth.

Consider 1.—He suffereth from all sorts of men: from the highest and the lowest, from the sacred and profane; being dragged about the streets by the scum of the people, forsaken by His friends, accused by the priests, made a laughing-stock by the soldiers, condemned in the priests' council, ignominiously treated in the king's court, and sentenced to death at the president's tribunal. Learn hence to contemn the judgments of men, who were so highly unjust and injurious to Christ.

Consider 2.—He suffered from those whom He came to save, and to whom He had been singularly beneficial, all the time of His preaching; so that He might truly say, "They have hated Me without cause."—John xv. 25. And which is yet more, He suffered Himself to be betrayed by His own disciples, to give us an example of patience in the like failings of friends. "For the man of My peace, in whom I trusted, etc., hath greatly supplanted Me."—Ps. xl. 10.

Consider 3.—How He was exposed and left to the tyranny of the devil, according to that of St. Luke: "This is your hour, and the power of darkness."—Luke xxii. 53. He was given over to Satan, not as Job was, with that restriction, "Yet save his life"—Job ii. 6,—but absolutely and even to death itself. Have compassion towards your Lord, thus forsaken by His friends, and left to the mercy of His enemies; and if at any time it be your fortune to experience the like mockeries from men, remember that the disciple is not to be above His master.—Matt. x. 24.

FRIDAY.

CHRIST'S PASSION IN GENERAL.

For whom He suffered.

Consider 1.—He suffered not for Himself, being incapable of doing anything that might deserve punishment, but for all men, to reconcile them to His Eternal Father, and to open unto them all the gates of heaven. And because the whole man was wounded, He would suffer in every kind, that so He might apply proper remedies to every vice. Therefore against our covetousness He opposed His nakedness, His reproaches against our pride, His torments against our luxury, His vinegar and gall against our gluttony, and so of the rest.

Consider 2.—More particularly how He suffered also for His enemies, that is for all sinners. "God commendeth His charity towards us, because when as yet we were sinners Christ died for us, etc. If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son."—Rom. v. 8, 10. And which is more, He prayed for His own executioners, that you might learn to "overcome evil by good."—Rom. xii. 21.

Consider 3.—He suffered for all, so that He offered to His Eternal Father His sufferings for every one in particular. Wherefore take them to yourself and use them as your own, saying with St. Paul, "Who loved me, and delivered Himself for me."—Gal. ii. 20. Think what return you can make Him. "What shall I render to the Lord for all the things that He hath rendered to me? I will take the chalice of salvation."—Ps. cxv. 3, 4. Take, therefore the chalice of His passion, and drink it at least spiritually by contemplation, and you will thereby have made the most proper and most acceptable return.

SATURDAY.

CHRIST'S PASSION IN GENERAL.

With what affection He suffereth.

1.—With the affection of a most ardent love, most earnestly beforehand wishing the hour of His passion were

come, and saying, "I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized: and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?"—Luke xii. 50.

2.—Of the most profuse liberality; for, whereas the least drop of His blood would have sufficed to redeem the whole world, by reason of the dignity of His person, He would, notwithstanding, pour out all He had. "I am poured out like water."—Ps. xxi. 15. Because "with Him is plentiful redemption."—Ps. cxxix. 7.

3.—Of the greatest meekness, "Who, when He was reviled, did not revile: when He suffered, He threatened not: but delivered Himself to him that judged Him unjustly"—1 Pet. ii. 23; and was "led as a sheep to the slaughter."—Isa. liii. 7.

4.—Of an insatiable zeal, thirsting for the salvation of all men, which made Him cry out on the cross, "I thirst."—John xix. 28.

5.—Of an incomparable humility, making Himself the "reproach of men, and the outcast of the people"—Ps. xxi. 7—who, notwithstanding, was "in form of God."

6.—Of extreme poverty, renouncing all earthly goods whatsoever, even His own garments, so as to hang naked on the cross.

7.—Of invincible patience and fortitude, in suffering constantly most grievous torments to the end.

8.—Of perfect obedience, being "obedient" in a matter of the greatest difficulty, "unto death, even to the death of the cross."—Phil. ii. 8. And that not only to His Eternal Father, but also to His bloody executioners, "I have given My body to the strikers, and My cheeks to them that plucked them: I have not turned away My face from them that rebuked Me and spit upon Me."—Isa. l. 6. Look thoroughly into this pattern of virtues, and do according to what you see therein.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the Seed of Eternal Life.

"I WILL sow her unto Me in the earth; and I will have mercy on her that was without mercy."—Osee ii. 23. Consider 1.—What is read to-day in the Gospel: "The sower went out to sow his seed," etc.—Luke viii. 5. Christ our Lord is both the sower and the seed itself; for He soweth His own precious body under the form of wheat in the hearts of the faithful, not unto a corruptible but an incorruptible harvest, and unto life everlasting. For "he that soweth in the Spirit (saith St. Paul), of the Spirit shall reap life everlasting."—Gal. vi. 8. Think with yourself how much this blessed harvest is to be wished for.

Consider 2.—This divine seed, although in itself most fruitful, notwithstanding requireth the concurrence of a good soil to bring forth fruit. Wherefore, if it fall on the highway, it is trampled upon by the passengers; if upon stones, it is parched; if among thorns, it is choked up. See, therefore, whether your soul be a fit soil, well cleansed, far from the highway; or rather, whether it be not thorny, stony, full of the cares and occupations of this life, closed to receive heavenly influences, and open to all manner of thoughts and distractions. But if it be so, see that you correct yourself, and prepare your soul to receive this heavenly seed.

Consider 3.—This seed though in a good soil, and in the best heart, doth not "yield fruit," but in patience, as Christ saith, that you might learn to persevere with patience in expectation of the effect and fruit of this divine grain, and whatsoever visitation of God; and give not over to cultivate your soul, for that, perhaps, you do not perceive that fruit which you desire. "Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth; patiently bearing till he receive the early and the latter rain"—James v. 7—(that is, either timely or late fruit). Do you likewise, and you will bring forth plenty of excellent fruit.

MONDAY.

HE FORETELLETH TO HIS DISCIPLES HIS PASSION.

Consider 1.—"Behold we go up to Jerusalem," etc.—Matt. xx. 18. The time being now come wherein Christ had decreed from all eternity to suffer for the redemption of the world, He went up with His disciples to Jerusalem, with great cheerfulness and speed; for, He "went before them, and they were astonished: and following were afraid."—Mark x. 32. Thus did He hasten to His death, carried on by the force of His love. You, on the contrary, are slow in suffering anything. He also went before, leading the way; that you might learn to show, first, by example, what you would persuade by words.

Consider 2.—He revealeth His passion to His disciples: "The Son of Man shall be betrayed to the chief priests." He had done this before, but now more expressly. He maketh this frequent mention of His passion, though most bitter in itself, for He bore it continually in mind; and amidst all His glory in the transfiguration, He treated "of His decease that He should accomplish in Jerusalem."—Luke ix. 31. Do you endeavour to be piously affected towards the memory of it, that you may say with the spouse in the Canticles, "A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me."—Cant. i. 12.

Consider 3.—"And they understood none of these things."—Luke xviii. 34. The apostles were as yet worldly given, and bent upon honours and preferments: "And there was also a strife amongst them, which of them should seem to be the greater."—Luke xxii. 24. Therefore they understood not the mystery of the cross, and what great good consisted in humility, and in suffering reproach. Cast off these worldly affections, if you will understand the mystery of the cross. Ponder Christ's severe reprehension of St. Peter, dissuading Him from the ignominy of His passion. "Go behind me, Satan, thou art a scandal unto Me: because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men."—Matt. xvi. 23.

TUESDAY.

CHRIST'S SOLEMN ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM BEFORE HIS PASSION.—PART I.

Consider 1.—Christ drawing near to Jerusalem, sendeth two of His disciples to bring unto Him an ass, upon which He intended to ride into the city. At other times He used to go on foot to the places where He preached; now He would be carried, though not in a chariot nor a sumptuous steed, but on the back of a mean ass; whereby He would manifest to the world that poverty, humility, and meekness are the proper ensigns of His kingdom. Whence the prophet: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion, etc. Behold thy King will come to thee, the just and Saviour: He is poor, and riding upon an ass," etc.—Zach. ix. 9.

Consider 2.—Our Saviour would enter after that unusual manner: 1. To show with what alacrity He went to die, as if He were going to a kingdom, as indeed He was, for "on the tree God possessed His reign." 2. To teach us to triumph in the midst of reproaches and contempts. 3. That the ignominy of His passion might be so much the greater, by how much the greater was His previous glory: "And being exalted (said the prophet) I have been humbled and troubled."—Ps. lxxxvii. 16.

Consider 3.—The acclamations of the people: "Hosanna to the Son of David," etc.—Matt. xxi. 15. Where ponder, first, that this cry was of the mean and common sort of people, not of the rich or wise men of the world, from whom these mysteries were kept hidden. Secondly, how different was this acclamation from that wherein soon after they cried out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!"—Luke xxiii. 21. How inconstant and deceitful is the favour of the world, which you, notwithstanding, regard and value so much; but if you be wise, "God forbid that you should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."—Gal. vi. 14.

WEDNESDAY.

CHRIST'S SOLEMN ENTRANCE INTO JERUSALEM, AND HIS WEEPING OVER THE CITY.—PART II.

Consider 1.—Christ in the midst of that triumph, drawing nearer to the city, wept for it. 1. To show that He was not, and that we ought not to be transported with like honours, when they are done us; but "if riches," or honours, "abound, set not your heart upon them."—Ps. lxi. 11. 2. Through charity He bewailed the blindness of the Jews, which He knew would prove to be their ruin. 3. To give us an example of weeping and lamenting in this vale of tears; for we read of Him to have wept several times, but not even to have laughed; and to have pronounced them "blessed that mourn."—Matt. v. 5.

Consider 2.—Christ's words upon the city: "If thou also had known," etc., thou wouldst surely weep. "For the days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall compass thee," etc.—Luke xix. 42. Take these words as spoken to yourself, for if you did but know, "and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace," and what were to befall you hereafter, what temptations, what miseries, what falls, you would certainly weep, and spend the time you enjoy at present more profitably. Do it therefore now with all diligence, and fortify yourself so, that you be not hereafter overcome, and cast down by your spiritual enemies.

Consider 3.—Christ assigneth the cause of the city's ruin to this, "Because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation." How greatly doth it import to know the time wherein God doth visit you, by His holy inspirations, by pious books, etc., exciting you to virtue, to the contempt of the world, and the like? Endeavour therefore to understand the time of your visitation. And even in "to-day, if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts"—Ps. xciv. 8—but go follow Him. Betake yourself to prayer and deplore the general riot and folly of men in these days.

THURSDAY.

CHRIST IS SOLD BY JUDAS FOR THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER.

Consider 1.—Christ could many ways have been delivered up into the hands of the Jews, but for the greater ignominy would be sold, and that by His own disciple, whom He Himself had chosen for an apostle; that we might learn to bear with false brethren; and that there is no place, or state of life so holy, in which we are not in danger of falling. He was not ignorant that it would be held a foul disgrace to His school; notwithstanding He chose him for an apostle, for our instruction; and, "in that point," as St. Ambrose saith, "He had rather have His judgment called in question by us, than His affection."—Ambr. lib. v. in Luc. vi.

Consider 2.—To what a height of madness the spirit of avarice doth bring a man. "What will you give me, and I will deliver Him unto you?"—Matt. xxvi. 15. Ponder who it is that is sold. It is the Lord and God of all things. For how much? For thirty pieces of silver, which was the usual price of a common slave. At so easy a rate is sold the Sovereign of the world, so vilely is He undervalued. By whom? By His own beloved disciple. To whom? To His mortal and sworn enemies. Compassionate your Lord, and disdain not at any time to be treated below your deserts and quality.

Consider 3.—How often have you sold the same Lord for less, while you have parted with Him for some petty delight, for a sinful thought, for a detracting word, and the like. Think how many there are who do the same over and over again, and out of extreme folly and madness, set God to sale for trifles. "A fool worketh mischief as it were for sport"—Prov. x. 23—saith Solomon. Look that you be none of them, and endeavour to appease God's wrath against such as do so.

FRIDAY.

THE PASCHAL LAMB.

Consider 1.—Christ, the day before He suffered, to teach us perfect obedience to the laws of God, would eat the Paschal Lamb with His disciples, sending before Peter and John (faith and charity), to prepare a room, which was "a large dining-room furnished."—Mark xiv. 15. Such ought to be your soul, enlarged with charity, and adorned with all manner of virtue, as often as you entertain Christ in the Holy Communion. Ponder how Christ being seated with His disciples, said to them: "With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer."—Luke xxii. 15. Admire the excess of His love towards us, longing for the time wherein He was to leave us His precious body and blood, and to suffer and die for us. O that you were so desirous of occasions to do and suffer for Him.

Consider 2.—How religiously Christ observeth all the ceremonies and rites ordained by the law for the eating of the Paschal Lamb. In each of them, reflecting upon Himself, and His passion, whereof it was a representative figure. "Christ our pasch (saith the Church) is immolated, for He is the true lamb that taketh away the sins of the world." Behold, therefore, Christ with His disciples standing at the table, girded about the loins, with shoes on feet, and staves in hand, like passengers, eating in haste, etc.—Exod. xii. 11—whereby were expressed the vigour of mind and promptness wherewith He suffered.

Consider 3.—Christ beholding the lamb upon the table, dead, flayed and roasted, He reflected how Himself was to be extended upon the cross, dead, flayed with whips, and scorched with the heat and rage of His torments. Beholding the same lamb cut in pieces, without breaking any of the bones, He considered the mangling of His own sacred body, and disjointing of His bones, though without any being broken. The haste wherewith they were to eat the lamb, represented the hasty fury and rage of His enemies to make away with Him. The bitter lettuce called to His mind the gall and bitter chalice of His passion.

And the staff in His hand represented the cross which He was to embrace, and to be fastened unto.

SATURDAY.

WASHING THE DISCIPLES' FEET.

Consider 1.—After the paschal lamb was eaten, Christ intended to institute a new memorial of Himself, in leaving us His precious body and blood, and to teach us with what humility and purity we ought to come to it, would wash the feet of His disciples. Ponder the admirable charity and humility of Christ in this action, expressed unto us in very signal terms by the evangelist: "Jesus knowing that His hour was come, that He should pass out of this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto the end. And when supper was done, (the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon, to betray Him,) knowing that the Father had given Him all things into His hands, and that He came from God, and goeth to God. He riseth from supper, and layeth aside His garments, and having taken a towel, girded Himself."—John xiii. 1-4. Ponder each particular.

Consider 2.—"After that, He put water into a basin, and began to wash the feet of His disciples, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded." Behold the God of heaven cast at the feet of poor fishermen, and performing the office of the meanest servant, which made St. Peter cry out, "Lord, dost Thou wash my feet?" And again, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." Ponder Christ's severe reprehension of this disobedience: "If I wash thee not, thou shalt have no part with Me." And learn, that it is but false virtue and humility, that opposeth itself to obedience.

Consider 3.—How Christ also washeth Judas's feet, and, no doubt, with tender expressions of kindness, thereby to mollify his hard heart, but all in vain. Learn to love your enemies, and to gain them to you by doing good. Take heed of a hard heart, for "the wicked man when he is come into the depth of sins, contemneth, but ignominy and reproach follow him."—Prov. xviii. 3. Ponder

and observe those words of Christ, "I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you do also."—John xiii. 15.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the Light of your Soul.

"ARISE, be enlightened, Jerusalem, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."—Isa. lx. 1. Consider 1.—And imagine yourself to be that blind man in this day's gospel, that "sat by the way-side begging."—Luke xviii. 35. For you are truly blind in many things, not distinguishing between black and white, true and false, solid and counterfeited good; nor able to see your own defects, so that you may truly say with the prophet, "My iniquities have overtaken me, and I was not able to see."—Ps. xxxix. 13.

Consider 2.—What a sad and uncomfortable life it is, to be in continual darkness, without corporal light. How much more, then, to live in spiritual darkness and blindness of mind? "What manner of joy shall be to me (said Tobias, when he was blind), who sit in darkness, and see not the light of heaven?"—Tob. v. 12. Think with yourself, whether you behold the clear light of heaven, or rather the dim and fading light of the earth, and earthly things. Consider also how dangerous it is to be in darkness: "for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth"—John xii. 35,—and is exposed to a thousand dangers and falls, that you may hence learn rightly to esteem the benefit of divine light.

Consider 3.—How Christ our Lord is the "Sun of justice" (as the prophet saith—Mal. iv. 2,) and "the true light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world."—John i. 9. Beseech Him, therefore, that coming this day into your soul, He would produce therein the usual effects of light, and open your eyes to see your secret defects, and to distinguish true and real good from such as are only counterfeited; and have a care you do not close your eyes,

or shut your windows against this light. Job saith of sinners, "They have been rebellious to the light, they have not known His ways."—Job xxiv. 13. See you be not rebellious: set open the windows of your heart, and say with the prophet, "Thou lightest my lamp, O Lord. O my God, enlighten my darkness."—Ps. xvii. 29.

MONDAY.

THE INSTITUTION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.—PART I.

Consider 1.—Christ, after He had washed His disciples' feet, sat down again to table, and intending to leave behind Him a singular memorial of His love towards us, "took bread" into His hands, to show that it was the gift of a most liberal hand. "Thou openest Thy hand, and fillest with blessing every living creature."—Ps. cxliv. 16. Then "He lifted up His eyes to heaven," to show whence this bread cometh. "He gave thanks" to His Eternal Father for so great a gift bestowed upon man by His means. "Blessed it," and blessing it transformed it into His own body; do you also give thanks for being made partaker of the same divine bread, and beseech Him to give you such a blessing as may turn you into another man.

Consider 2.—How the apostles were astonished, when they heard that Christ would give them His own body; but they were at the same time illuminated with a heavenly light, wherewith they believed all things possible to Him. That you might also learn to captivate your understanding in obedience to faith, see with what humility, reverence, and devotion, each one communicateth, and do you the like, when you come to the same table. Judas alone in that company, "eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord."—1 Cor. xi. 29.

Consider 3.—"This do for the commemoration of Me."—1 Cor. xi. 25. Ponder Christ's infinite charity and liberality, whereby He would have this divine benefit continued throughout all ages, and therein gave power to priests, by virtue of His words, to consecrate His precious body, which was never granted even to angels. Think what a dignity this is; learn to reverence them, whom God hath so highly honoured, and to hear their voice, to which the Eternal Word

and Wisdom of God is so obedient at the altar. Be ever grateful, and endeavour to come always worthily to this divine mystery.

TUESDAY.

THE INSTITUTION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.—PART II.

Consider 1.—Christ would institute this divine mystery immediately before His passion. 1. To testify the excess of His love towards men, in preparing for them a heavenly banquet, and inestimable present even then when they were contriving His death. 2. To manifest the desire He had of ever remaining with us, even corporally; for being now about to depart out of the world, He would, notwithstanding, leave Himself, after a special manner, to abide with us for ever. 3. To leave us a perpetual memorial of His passion, and a living sacrifice, (the sacrifices of the ancient law ceasing by His death,) by which the fruit and virtue of His passion might be applied to us. 4. To make us the more sensible of His love, bequeathing Himself unto us by His last will and testament.

Consider 2.—Christ did institute this sacrament under the forms of bread and wine. 1. That so He might the more intimately be united to us, becoming meat and drink to us, penetrating our very bowels, and incorporating Himself with us. 2. To signify that He doth work in our souls, what bread and wine doth in our bodies; that is, nourish, conserve and augment our spiritual life, so as even to transform us into Himself. "He that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me."—John vi. 58. 3. That as bread is made one mass of many grains, and wine one liquor of many grapes, so by participation of this divine sacrament, the hearts of the faithful are made one spirit; and therefore it is properly called communion, or union of many among themselves, and of all with Christ.

Consider 3.—Although in each sacramental form, the entire body and blood of Christ is contained, without any real separation of one from the other, yet Christ would institute the sacrament in two different forms, the better to put us in mind of His passion, and to signify that thereby all His precious blood was entirely separated from His body, namely, by His sweat in the garden, by whips at the pillar,

by the thorns, by the nails, and by the lance on the cross. Think what you can return to our Lord for His infinite love towards you, expressed in this sacrament. Say with David, "I will take the chalice of Salvation," by grateful remembrance and compassion, "and I will call upon the name of the Lord."—Ps. cxv. 4.

ASH-WEDNESDAY.

OUR LORD'S SERMON AFTER THE LAST SUPPER.—PART I.

Consider 1.—Christ, after the communion of His body, delivered that long sermon to the apostles, which is in St. John; for that is the time wherein He is wont to treat more at large with the faithful soul, and would likewise with you, but that you leave Him presently after communion, or do not hearken to Him, and therefore profit little. In that divine sermon our Lord performed the part, 1. Of a master, delivering such things as He would chiefly have observed. 2. Of a comforter, allaying His disciples' grief for His future absence, showing how expedient it was for them. 3. Of an intercessor on our behalf of His Eternal Father, praying Him to preserve us. See you observe what He enjoineth, and be thankful for the rest.

Consider 2.—As our master, He doth chiefly recommend unto us the love of God and of Himself, above all things: "As My Father hath loved Me, I also have loved you. Abide in My love."—John xv. 9. Think whether you love Him as He hath loved you, and yet there can be no comparison between yours and His love, for His is infinitely beneficial to you, but yours wholly unprofitable to Him. Notwithstanding, out of pure love to you, and to gain yours to Himself, He hath given you His own flesh and blood for meat and drink, and His life upon the cross for your redemption. "And greater love than this no man hath."—John xv. 13.

Consider 3.—"If you love Me," saith He "keep My commandments."—John xiv. 15. And again, "If any one love Me, he will keep My word."—John xv. 23. "The proof therefore of love," saith St. Gregory, "is the performance of deeds." If you love Christ, resolve to do and suffer

something for Him; at least put on the affection of compassion for His sufferings, and leave it not off all this time of Lent. Offer up your fasting, and whatsoever you may suffer thereby, in union with His pains and griefs.

THURSDAY.

OUR LORD'S SERMON AFTER THE LAST SUPPER.—PART II.

Consider 1.—After the love of God, Christ doth earnestly recommend the love of our neighbour: "This is My commandment that you love one another, as I have loved you."—John xv. 12. He calleth it "His," and "a new" commandment, because He renewed it after it had fallen into disuse. And "new," as to the manner and perfection, requiring that our love be like His, that is, universal, without respect to deserts or recompense, even with our temporal inconvenience; and, if need be, with loss of life. "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another."—John xiii. 35. See you be His disciples in this, and take to heart what He, going now to die, inculcated in such weighty terms.

Consider 2.—Christ doth also much recommend unto us the use of prayer: "Hitherto you have not asked anything in My name; ask, and you shall receive."—John xvi. 24. "Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, that I will do," etc.—John xiv. 13. So friendly an invitation cannot but ground a great confidence. The poor and needy are invited, and even pressed to receive benefits; and He that inviteth, is most able to make good His word, and cannot deceive. Only we must be careful to pray in due manner, to wit, in Christ's name, that is, only for such things as appertain to our salvation, and with perseverance.

Consider 3.—Christ our Lord doth animate His disciples, and all that follow Him, to endure patiently reproach, torments, and death itself in His cause. "They will put you out of the synagogues; yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth a service to God."—John xvi. 2. He encourageth them. 1. By His own example. "The servant is not greater than his master; if they have persecuted Me, they will also per-

secute you."—John xv. 20. 2. In delivering it as a sign of election. "Because you are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you."—John xv. 19. 3. By proposing the reward: "Your sorrow shall be turned into joy."—John xvi. 20. Here offer yourself to suffer everything for Christ.

FRIDAY.

CHRIST IS SORROWFUL AND PRAYETH IN THE GARDEN.—FIRST STATION.

Consider 1.—"A hymn being said, He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where there was a garden"—Matt. xxvi. 30; John xviii. 1,—that where our ruin began, there might also begin our reparation. As He went, "He began to fear, and to be heavy"—Mark xiv. 33,—saying, "My soul is sorrowful even unto death"—Matt. xxvi. 37,—that is, My grief is equal to the pangs of death, and such as would take away My life, did I not reserve it for other torments. Christ could have been free of all this, and have gone to suffer with a pleasant heart, for the joys of the beatific vision, which He ever possessed, were able to have drowned all grief whatsoever. But He would take upon Him all these interior afflictions, that He might be like to us in all things, and withal, instruct us by His example, how to behave ourselves in the like sufferings.

Consider 2.—"When He was come to the place, He said to them: Pray, lest you enter into temptation."—Luke xxii. 40. Then, "going a little further, He fell upon His face, praying, and saying: My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt."—Matt. xxvi. 39. Ponder 1. His profound reverence in prostrating Himself. 2. His filial and confidential love in the tender name of Father. 3. His perfect resignation. "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." 4. His continuing therein for a whole hour. "Could you not watch one hour with Me?"—Matt. xxvi. 40. Take this as a pattern to pray by, and compare your prayers with it. Learn hence chiefly to resign yourself perfectly to God in all things, saying, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt."

Consider 3.—Christ, like a good pastor, careful of His

flock, even in that distress, and in the fervour of His prayer, visits His disciples, but finds them asleep, the first, second, and third time. Presently after communion, they were so fervent, as to offer themselves to die for their master, but now cannot so much as hold up their heads in prayer. See whether you do not easily relax from your good purposes. They formerly watched all night, for their worldly interest, in fishing; now, when it concerned their souls' good, though commanded to watch, they sleep without care. Take heed of sloth, tediousness, and forgetfulness, in spiritual things, whereby the soul doth truly slumber and sleep. "The soul's sleep," saith St. Augustine," is to forget God."—Aug. in Ps. vi. 2.

SATURDAY.

CHRIST IS COMFORTED BY AN ANGEL, AND SWEATETH BLOOD.

Consider 1.—Christ having left His disciples, and being in prayer the third time, "There appeared to Him an angel from heaven strengthening Him." Good God! So far did our Lord give Himself over to grief, as to borrow comfort from His own creature. Observe here how God sendeth comfort at last to those that persevere in prayer. Think what reasons the angel might use in comforting our Lord, representing unto Him the necessity of His passion, the glory that would thereby redound to His Father and Himself; the redemption of mankind, and the like, which, although He understood better Himself, yet would He not refuse the proffer of comfort, that you should not disdain to learn of, and be beholden to, your inferiors.

Consider 2.—"And His sweat became as drops of blood trickling down upon the ground." See how all over His body it gushes forth from the pores, and empurples the earth. Beseech Him to wash your soul also with the same; detest your own coldness in prayer, who can scarce let fall one single tear for your sins. Ponder the causes of so strong a sweat. 1. The lively apprehension of all His torments, as if they had been present. 2. A deep resentment of the sins, which, notwithstanding, would be committed, and of men's ingratitude, for whom,

in vain, He suffered those torments. Condole with your Saviour, and grieve that you were also the cause of His so great affliction.

Consider 3.—"And being in an agony, He prayed the longer." Learn hence, the more you are afflicted, the more to persist in prayer. Christ could easily have freed Himself from this agony or strife between the flesh and the spirit, but would suffer it to give us an example of resisting our passions, even to the shedding of our blood. Think how easily, notwithstanding, you let yourself be overcome by them, and for the least fear give over your good purposes. Wherefore on like occasions, "Do manfully, and let thy heart take courage, and wait thou for the Lord."—Ps. xxvi. 14.

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as your Captain.

"DELIVER me from my enemies, O my God, and defend me from them that rise up against me."—Ps. lviii. 2. Consider 1. What Job saith, "The life of man upon earth is a warfare."—Job vii. 1. We are in a continual conflict with three most fierce enemies, that are always working our ruin: the flesh, the world, and the devil.—Matt. iv. 1. Christ, as we read in this day's gospel, would be tempted by the devil, and fight hand to hand with him, to train us up like a good commander, by His own example. Therefore David crieth out, "Blessed be the Lord my God, who teacheth my hands to fight, and my fingers to war."—Ps. cxliii. 1.

Consider 2.—How much it doth import us not to be overcome in this war, where we fight for an eternity. View yourself thoroughly, and see in what particular you are most weak and defective, and in what manner of encounters you are more frequently wounded. Rely on the defence and conduct of this your Captain, who is to come this day into your soul; for He will gird you with strength for battle.—

Ps. xvii. 40. He will protect and guard you. "If armies in camp should stand together against you, your heart shall not fear."—Ps. xxvi. 3.

Consider 3.—Soldiers are wont to be sworn to their captain; so ought you to yours. This duty you have once performed in baptism, by renouncing the devil and his pomps. But, oh! how often have you played the renegade, and shamefully left your colours. Yield yourself now up again to your Captain; renew your oath, and promise from henceforth a more exact obedience. Cast forth from your heart whatsoever may be suspected to have confederacy with His and your own enemies. Say with the prophet: "Deliver me from my enemies, O Lord, to Thee have I fled; teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God."—Ps. cxlii. 9.

MONDAY.

CHRIST MEETETH JUDAS AND HIS FOLLOWERS.

Consider 1.—Christ having ended His prayers, said to His disciples: "Rise, let us go; behold he is at hand that will betray Me." And "as He yet spoke, behold Judas, one of the twelve came," etc. Observe Judas's diligence in his wicked design: the other apostles sleep and are scarcely roused up at the third call; but Judas watcheth to betray his Master. How busy are men in their temporal affairs; how careless in their spiritual! Deplore this extreme folly of the world. "Judas, one of the twelve came." O prodigious ingratitude! He, who was so highly favoured by his Master, cometh at the head of His enemies, to deliver Him up into their hands. Learn not to rely much on gifts bestowed gratis and without deserts, of which the more you have, the more you also have to answer for, and the greater cause to fear. "Howl, thou fir-tree (saith the prophet), for the cedar is fallen."—Zach. xi. 2. If an apostle fell, why may not you likewise fall?

Consider 2.—"And with him a great multitude, with swords and clubs." Behold the wicked mob; see how they come, all armed with malice, and prepared to work their wicked ends upon Jesus; contriving, by the way, the manner of laying hold on Him, and securing Him from escape. How Judas "gave them a sign, saying: Whomsoever I shall

kiss, that is He, hold Him fast." Think what fright the apostles were in at the noise of the soldiers: then was truly fulfilled what the prophet saith: "Many dogs have encompassed me; the council of the malignant hath besieged me." —Ps. xxi. 17.

Consider 3.—Christ did not flee, nor render Himself invisible, as easily He might, nor called fire from heaven to consume His enemies, as did Elias—4 Kings i. 10; John xviii. 4;—but with an undaunted courage, and desirous of dying for you, "went forth" towards them. See you be grateful, and learn constancy in adversity, and not to avoid occasions of suffering for Christ, but rather, with courage and resolution, to meet and entertain them.

TUESDAY.

THE KISS OF JUDAS.

Consider 1.—"And forthwith Judas, coming to Jesus, said, Hail Rabbi! and he kissed Him." Ponder the impudence of this treacherous disciple; he fawns upon his Master to destroy Him: such are the allurements of the world; they seem kisses, but truly are so many darts. "His words are smoother than oil, and the same are darts."—Ps. liv. 22. How many are there that, with outward signs of devotion, fondly fawn upon our Lord, while they carry about them a treacherous mind! How many again, that have nothing but fair words and honey in their mouths, while their heart is full of gall, poison, and rancour against their neighbour! See you be none of these; but, above all, take heed you give not Christ such a kiss in the sacrament.

Consider 2.—Christ's admirable meekness and charity. He upbraideth not, reproacheth not, refuseth not, but receiveth the kiss, and speaketh friendly to him, saying, "Friend, whereto art thou come?" If so, at least, He might win him to repentance, He calleth him friend, to make him one; He asketh what he cometh for, that entering into himself, he might come to understand the enormity of his crime, in so foully betraying his best friend and benefactor, his Master, his Lord and God. See how mercifully God doth seek to reclaim sinners; and learn with what mildness you ought to behave yourself to your brother that injureth you.

Consider 3.—Those other words: "Judas, dost thou betray the Son of Man with a kiss?"—Luke xxii. 48. What stony heart would not these words mollify?—and yet they move him not. We condemn Judas for his hard heart, but little reflect that we are often guilty of the same, while we are nothing moved by the inspirations of God and checks of our own conscience, crying out with a loud voice, "What do you do?—will you sin?—will you offend God?" etc. It was a circumstance highly aggravating Judas's sin, to make the kiss of peace an instrument of His treason. What then will it be to turn, by abuse, the gifts of grace into instruments of God's offence and our own damnation? Take warning, therefore, in time.

WEDNESDAY.

CHRIST CASTETH HIS ENEMIES ON THE GROUND, AND IS TAKEN.

Consider 1.—Jesus having asked the soldiers, "Whom seek ye? They answered Him: Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith to them: I am He"—John xviii. 4, 5,—and thereby cast them on the ground, to give them a testimony of His divinity, and to show that He could not be apprehended unless He had pleased. Ponder how those words "I am," are of singular comfort to the just, and signify as much as I am your father and protector, your joy and comfort; your wisdom, your justice, your sanctification and redemption, etc. "It is I; fear ye not."—Matt. xiv. 27. But to the wicked, they are full of terror, threatening, wrath, indignation, punishment, revenge, and damnation. If now, therefore, they strike such terror into His enemies, when it was, as He said, their "hour and the power of darkness"—Luke xxii. 53,—what will they do when it will be His day and hour of exercising the power of Judge?

Consider 2.—"They went backward, and fell to the ground."—John xviii. 6. This is a type of obstinate and impenitent sinners, that fall flat on their backs, so as not to see or regard their falls. Beseech our Lord, that if at any time you come to fall, it may be upon your face, that you may see and acknowledge your fall by humility, and get up soon again by penance. See how St. Peter draweth his

sword, and cutteth off the ear of Malchus; but Christ reprehendeth him for it, forbiddeth all violence and resistance, and healeth the servant's ear; that you should learn to do good for evil to your enemies.

Consider 3.—Christ having said: "If you seek Me, let these go their way," forgetful of Himself, solicitous for His disciples, then they drew near, and "laid hands on Jesus, and held Him."—Mark xiv. 46. Behold with what rage those hell-hounds rush upon the meek lamb; buffet, kick, and beat Him with their clubs; cast Him on the ground, and trample over Him. Good God, what a spectacle is this! "He who sitteth upon the cherubims"—Ps. lxxix. 3—is trampled under the feet of the wicked. The same do all sinners, who, as St. Paul saith, "tread under foot the Son of God."—Heb. x. 29. See you be not one.

THURSDAY.

CHRIST IS BOUND.—THE DISCIPLES FLEE.

Consider 1.—Having apprehended Jesus, they bound Him—John xviii. 12,—doubtless with hard cords. See how He yields His sacred hands and arms to be bound; who, notwithstanding, if He had pleased, could more easily than Samson have broken those cords all in pieces, as "threads of webs"—Jud. xvi. 12. It was love alone that could fetter those hands which framed the heavens, and wrought wonders on earth. Do you, likewise, permit yourself to be bound with the bands of charity, with the tie of obedience, and obligation of such duties as appertain to the state and condition you live in. "Put thy foot into her fetters, and thy neck into her chains (saith the wise man, speaking of true wisdom), and be not grieved with her bands."—Eccius. vi. 25, 26.

Consider 2.—"Then His disciples leaving Him, all fled away."—Mark xiv. 50. Think what an affliction it was to Christ to be left so by His friends; whereof He often complaineth by His prophets: "Thou hast put away My acquaintance far from Me; they have set Me an abomination to themselves."—Ps. lxxxvii. 9. "I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the Gentiles there is not a man with Me."—Isa. lxiii. 3. Besides, it was an action that re-

dounded to the dishonour and reproach of His school, which had brought up such timorous and faint-hearted disciples. But He was chiefly concerned for their want of faith, wherein they did all waver. See you do not leave Christ to suffer alone; bear Him company, at least, by affection and compassion. Be content to be slighted and left by your friends.

Consider 3.—The weakness of man's nature in these apostles; who, notwithstanding the many miracles they had seen Christ work, the grace which they lately received by the divine Eucharist, and fervour wherein every one said: "Though I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee"—Matt. xxvi. 35;—yet no sooner were they assaulted with temptation, but they all failed. Think what little reason you have to trust yourself. Therefore, "coming to the service of God (saith the wise man), stand in fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation."—Ecclus. ii. 1. And the apostle: "With fear and trembling work out your salvation."—Phil. ii. 12.

FRIDAY.

CHRIST IS LED TO ANNAS.—SECOND STÂTION.

Consider 1.—"They led Him away to Annas first."—John xviii. 13. Ponder how Christ would be brought before all the tribunals, for the greater ignominy. Therefore He is led first to Annas, as president of the supreme council, whereunto it appertained to judge of doctrines. See with what clamour, laughter and ignominy Christ is hurried along the ways and streets, people running everywhere to their doors and windows to see the captive. How different was this entrance into Jerusalem, from that which He made a few days before, when they cried out, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!"—Matt. xxi. 9. Hence learn to contemn the inconstancy of worldly favour.

Consider 2.—How Christ is brought as a criminal to the tribunal of this judge. The Creator stands before His creature; the Eternal Wisdom of God is brought to the bar, to account for His doctrine to an arrogant smatterer in the law. Behold the doctors around Him, all puffed up with their learning, "rejoicing as conquerors rejoice, after taking a prey."—Isa. ix. 3. Hear how they question Him con-

cerning His doctrine and disciples. Beseech our Lord to instruct you in things appertaining to your salvation, and not to let you seek after vain sciences, whose fruit is no other than pride and ostentation.

Consider 3.—How Christ beareth their reproaches with silence; but answereth resolutely to the point of doctrine, because thereon depended the salvation of many. "I have openly spoken to the world," etc.—"Why askest thou Me? ask them who have heard."—John xviii. 20, 21. Learn hence to stand resolute in defence of your faith and of truth, and to be silent in your own private injuries. See how He saith nothing of His disciples; because He could not commend them as staggerers in their faith, He would not say anything in their dispraise. Do you, in the same manner, endeavour to hide others' defects when you can, and not to discover them but to a good end.

SATURDAY.

THE BLOW CHRIST RECEIVED IN ANNAS'S HOUSE.

Consider 1.—"One of the servants standing by gave Jesus a blow."—John xviii. 22. Ponder here the general circumstances. Who?—to whom?—and what? Think: 1. How cruel this blow was, as being given by a furious and armed soldier. 2. How ignominious, before so great an assembly, and inflicted upon His person, whose sanctity of life and miracles made Him to be admired and respected by all. 3. How unjust and injurious, for a most just and prudent answer. How grievous, as being seconded with the loud laughter and scornful applause of the company. Oh! amiable countenance, which the angels so much desire to behold, how hath this ignominious buffet set you all over in a blush! Now, "my beloved is white and ruddy"—Cant. v. 10,—and to be imitated by me both in candour of life and vermillion of patience.

Consider 2.—On the contrary, the mildness and patience of our Lord. He is not moved to indignation, He revengeth not, though it were in His power, and could in a moment have annihilated the wretch: yet He modestly justifieth Himself, that He might not seem to have injured the high priest, whom He respected, for the place and

authority he bore. "If I have spoken evil, give testimony of the evil; but if well, why strikest thou Me?" How different are your replies even when you have done amiss! Endeavour, therefore, to imitate your Lord, and "in your patience to possess your soul."—Luke xxi. 19.

THIRD STATION.

Consider 3.—"And Annas sent Him bound to Caiphas." Imagine what a painful and ignominious journey this was to our Lord, being dragged about the streets at that time of night, like some notorious malefactor, from one judgment seat to another. Think what indignities He suffereth, as He passeth along, from all sorts of people, even those that had received benefits from Him. What a spectacle was it to heaven to see the Lord of angels thus abused! Condole, admire, give thanks, imitate, etc.

SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the Transfigurer of your soul.

"THE Spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee, etc., and thou shalt be changed into another man."—1 Kings x. 6. Consider 1.—What is read to-day in the gospel, that Christ transfigured Himself, taking upon Him the form of a glorious body.—Matt. xvii. The same will He do this day to your soul, transfiguring it into Himself, by virtue of the Holy Eucharist, if you do not otherwise hinder Him. For the Eucharist makes us, as St Thomas speaketh, the same with God. And St. Augustine maketh God to say, "I am the food of great ones, grow, and you shall feed on Me, yet so, that thou shalt not change Me into thee, but thou shalt be changed into Me."

Consider 2.—What an inestimable benefit and dignity it is for man to be transformed into God, and "to be made conformable to the image of His Son."—Rom. viii. 29. It was the temptation of our first parents, "You shall be as Gods;" but they were deluded. By the Eucharist, and the

grace that proceedeth from it, we truly become one with God, being made partakers of the divine nature, and even incorporated, and of the same blood with Christ, as that holy Father—St. Cry. Cat. 4.—speaketh. Humble yourself, therefore, and say with the prophet, "What am I, or what is my life, or my father's family, that I should be," not "the son-in-law of a king"—1 Kings xviii. 18,—but the true adoptive son of God? for "as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God."—John i. 12.

Consider 3.—What is said of Moses, that "his face was" resplendent, and shining like two rays of glory, "from the conversation of the Lord."—Exod. xxxiv. 29. Be you also much conversant with God in prayer, that you may in like manner be transfigured. Besides you must make Him the only object of your love and affection, and perfectly hate whatsoever is displeasing unto Him, for as St. Augustine saith, "Every one is such as is his love: if you love earth you will be earth, if you love God you shall be God;" love God, therefore, that you may be one with Him.

MONDAY.

CHRIST IS ACCUSED BEFORE CAIPHAS, ETC.

Consider 1.—Christ being brought before Caiphas, "the chief priests and the whole council sought false witness against Jesus, that they might put Him to death."—Matt. xxvi. 59. O injustice, judges who should punish, seek false witness against known innocence; and patronize their private unjust envy and hatred, by the pretence of public justice. See how the Son of God standeth at the bar before His sworn enemies, and foresworn witnesses and accusers. The innocent Lamb, "who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth."—1 Pet. ii. 22—answereth all His accusations with silence. "But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and as a dumb man, not opening his mouth."—Ps. xxxvii. 14. Learn, hence, to be deaf and dumb on the like occasions, and to commit your cause to God.

Consider 2.—So irreprehensible was Christ's life, that His very enemies, even upon false informations, could not fasten upon anything that could make up a crime against

Him. Wherefore the high priest conjureth Him, by the living God, to say whether He were Christ, that He might condemn Him of blasphemy if He affirmed it. Christ who had been silent before, in reverence of the sacred name of God, answereth, "Thou sayest I am," and withal giveth them an item of the latter judgment; if, perhaps, for fear thereof they might be moved to desist from their wicked intents. "But the perverse are hard to be corrected."—Eccles. i. 15. Beseech our Lord you may never come to be one of them.

Consider 3.—The counterfeited zeal of the wicked.—"Then the high priest rent his garment, saying: He hath blasphemed."—Matt. xxvi. 65. Do you rather rend your heart with true contrition for being the cause of all these sufferings of Christ. "Rend your hearts, and not your garments"—Joel ii. 13,—says the Lord. Hear how they all cry out with one voice, "He is guilty of death." O most unjust sentence! Sweet Jesus, do You thus endure to be held a blaphemer, and sentenced to death, and shall I seek to be thought more of by all; and better than I am?

TUESDAY.

CHRIST IN THE HOUSE OF CAIPHAS.—PART I.

Consider 1.—How Christ being sentenced guilty of death, "Then did they spit in His face, and buffeted Him; and others struck His face with the palms of their hands, saying: Prophesy unto us." Ponder five extraordinary kinds of ignominy which Christ suffered all that night. 1. They spit upon Him, who by spittle had given sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, and hearing to the deaf; and on that face, which the angels adore, and just souls long after, saying, "Shew Thy face, and we shall be saved."—Ps. lxxix. 20. He was spit on by most lewd miscreants, striving to outdo one another; so that He was covered all over with filth. But He, like a meek lamb, made good the words of the prophet, "I have not turned away My face from them that rebuked Me, and spit upon Me"—Isa. l. 6,—but with a peaceable countenance received all. But do not sinners still to this day spit on Thee? Are not our sins, for which

You suffered all this, and death itself, more loathsome unto You than the spittle of the Jews.

Consider 2.—The second ignominy. "And they blindfolded Him."—Luke xxii. 64. No doubt, but with some loathsome cloth, that their sport might be the more completely injurious. They veiled those "eyes to whom all things are naked and open"—Heb. iv. 13,—and covered that face, whereof all nations stand in love and admiration. The same do all sinners, who that they may sin with the greater liberty, hide God from themselves, and think that He seeth them not. They say, according to Job, "What doth God know?" etc. "The clouds are His covert, and He doth not consider our things."—Job xxii. 13, 14. Have a care you be not one of these.

Consider 3.—"They buffeted Him, and others struck His face with the palms of their hands."—Matt. xxvi. 67. Ponder how thick one upon another, with what cruelty, and how ignominiously, by those ruffians, every one striving to outdo another in scoffs and blows. Then was truly fulfilled that of the prophet, "He shall give His cheek to him that striketh Him: He shall be filled with reproaches."—Lam. iii. 30. Admire, compassionate, imitate.

WEDNESDAY.

CHRIST IN THE HOUSE OF CAIPHAS.—PART II.

Consider 1.—The fourth kind of ignominy was the insolence they practised upon the sacred hair and beard of our Lord, pulling and tearing off both with violence; which although the Evangelists do not express, yet Isaias doth signify as much in these words, "I have given My body to the strikers, and My cheeks to them that plucked them."—Isa. l. 6. Samson out of fondness for Dalila lost his hair—Judges xvi.—but You, O Lord, out of a better love to mankind, suffer Yourself after a violent and cruel manner to be despoiled of Yours, so as to become even bald again. O make me suffer the like for the love of You, that having cut off all superfluities, I may follow You, as naked as You make Yourself for me.

Consider 2.—The fifth kind of ignominy, of insulting over Him, with reviling and reproachful language, saying,

"Prophesy unto us, O Christ, who is he that struck Thee?" —Matt. xxvi. 68. "And blaspheming, many other things they said against Him."—Luke xxii. 65. Here they renew their old slanders, calling Him a glutton, a drunkard, a seducer, a blasphemer, possessed with the devil, and the like; so that Job was verified in His sacred person: "They have opened their mouths upon Me, and reproaching Me, they struck Me on the cheek; they are filled with My pains."—Job xvi. 11. Consider with what patience Christ endured all this, and be confounded at your own impatience, who can scarce take a light word at your brother's hands.

Consider 3.—These indignities lasted the whole night; for they of the court and council, in all likelihood, repairing home to take rest on their soft beds, Christ was delivered up to the guards to be strictly watched, and treated at their pleasure and mercy. Think what sense and feeling our blessed Lord had all that night, in the condition of being tired out with ill usage and want of sleep and rest; and hence gather what yours ought to be. Be ashamed of your little mortification and patience in bearing light affronts and occasions of your own confusion, seeing your Lord for your sake hath endured far greater, in all kinds, and at the hands of the basest sort of people.

THURSDAY.

ST. PETER'S DENYING CHRIST.—PART I.

Consider 1.—St. Peter having followed our Lord into Caiphas's house, and standing with the rest at the fire, "There came to him a servant maid, saying: Thou also wast with Jesus the Galilean. But he denied before them all, saying: I know not what thou sayest," etc.—Matt. xxvi. 69, 70. He who a few hours before said, "Though I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee"—Matt. xxvi. 35,—now at the first word, and that of a woman, out of shame and fear, denieth that he ever knew Him. O how many are there now-a-days, who, not out of humility, but out of a shameful fear of what the world would say or think of them, dare not own any Christian or virtuous action, nor profess themselves disciples and followers of Christ!—Luke xxii. 57. See you be none of these.

Consider 2.—Peter being still in the same company, and taxed by many of being Christ's disciple, he persisteth in his denial the second and third time; neither minded he the first cock crowing; or at least, cared not, but, "began to curse and to swear that he knew not the man."—Matt. xxvi. 74. Observe the different effects of good and evil company. Peter, among his fellow disciples, was so fervent as to offer to die for his Master; in this lewd company he disowneth Him. Learn hence to avoid evil company and conversation; for, as the apostle saith, "Evil communications corrupt good manners."—1 Cor. xv. 33.

Consider 3.—Some particular circumstances of Saint Peter's fall, which all the Evangelists set down at large, to teach us to be wary by others' harms. 1. The occasion of his fall was that vain presumption of himself: "Although all shall be scandalized in Thee, I will never be scandalized."—Matt. xxvi. 33. 2. His negligence in prayer, yielding to sleep, when he should have watched in prayer, by Christ's express command, "Watch ye and pray, that ye enter not into temptation." 3. The instrument of this fall was a woman, as was that of Adam's first sin. Admire and tremble to see the pillar of the Church cast down at the voice of a woman. His sin increased by degrees, passing from a simple denial, to execration and open perjury. Learn to resist the very beginnings of evil, and to be greatly concerned for small defects; for, "he that contemneth small things, shall fall by little and little."

FRIDAY.

ST. PETER'S DENYING CHRIST.—PART II.

Consider 1.—"The Lord turning, looked on Peter." While Peter was actually denying our Lord the third time, Jesus happened to be led down from the upper room, where He was condemned, to the lower court where Peter was, and graciously looked upon His sheep that was perishing, or, as some expound, with the interior eyes of His mercy looked upon him afar off, and by His grace moved him to repentance. See how, in the midst of His own afflictions, He forgetteth not His ungrateful disciple. With the same eyes, O Lord, "Look Thou upon me, and have mercy on me."—Ps. xxiv. 16.

Consider 2.—The conversion and repentance of Saint Peter: "And going forth he wept bitterly"—Matt. xxvi. 75,—not out of the servile fear of punishment, but out of love, and sense of his ingratitude in offending so good a Lord, master, and benefactor. He rightly understood that of Jeremias, "That it is an evil and a bitter thing for thee, to have left the Lord thy God."—Jer. ii. 19. Do you also procure to understand it aright, that you may henceforward keep yourself from falling. O how often have you, not only in bare words, but by deeds, denied your Lord, and offended Him, perhaps more than Peter, but have not, as yet, duly lamented your faults, as he did?

Consider 3.—The long penance St. Peter performed for thus denying his master. He is said to have bewailed it his whole life, breaking forth into tears as often as the cock-crowing, or other occasion refreshed the memory of his sin; insomuch, that his eyes were become as two fountains of tears, and his continual weeping had made furrows in his cheeks. Be confounded to see that nothing drieth up sooner than your tears. Persevere therefore in works of penance, and as Ecclesiasticus admonisheth, "Be not without fear about sin forgiven."—Ecclus. v. 5.

SATURDAY.

THE DESPAIR OF JUDAS.

Consider 1.—"Then Judas who betrayed Him, seeing that He was condemned, repenting him, returned the thirty silver pieces," etc, saying, "I have sinned in betraying innocent blood."—Matt. xxvii. 3. Think what an unquiet mind Judas had, after his treacherous and sacrilegious crime; so that he could take no joy in the money for which he sold his Lord; but the worm of his guilty conscience gnawing his heart, he brought it back; whence you may learn that sinners reap no solid content from their wickedness, but much pain, disquiet, and trouble. "Lord, You have ordained it (saith St. Augustine), and accordingly it is certain, that every inordinate mind is its own punishment." Therefore in Job it is said of the impious, "The sound of dread is always in his ears."—Job xv. 21.

Consider 2.—The answers of the wicked priests: "What

is that to us? look thou to it."—Matt. xxvii. 4. They are little concerned for their neighbour, whether he perish or not; and like Cain will not be their brother's guardians; not so, the good ones who labour to pull their neighbours out of the depth of sin. They do not say, "What is it to us? look ye to it," but help and assist as far as they are able, some with charitable offies, others by their prayers; they are tender to all in compassion, and with the apostle, "To all men become all things, that they may save all."—1 Cor. ix. 22. These you must also imitate.

Consider 3.—"He went and hanged himself with a halter." See how one sin is the punishment of another, despair of treachery, God often permitting us to fall the second time in punishment of the first sin, that you may learn to shun all. Take notice of the subtle wiles of the devil, who at first provoketh to sin, and afterwards taking away all hopes of pardon, casteth the sinner headlong into damnation by despair. Observe also how desperate and mad are the determinations of a troubled conscience, so that the wise man had reason to say, "A troubled conscience always forecasteth grievous things."—Wisd. xvii. 10. Lastly, from this final ruin of an apostle, "He that thinketh himself to stand, let him take heed lest he fall."—1 Cor. x. 12.

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the Guardian of your Soul.

"I HAVE sinned, what shall I do to Thee, O keeper of men?—Job vii. 20. Consider 1.—What is said in this day's gospel: "When a strong man armed keepeth his court, those things are in peace which he possesseth."—Luke xi. 21. Imagine therefore your soul to be a court or castle, which our Lord, who is both "strong and armed," desireth to guard, that whatsoever she possesseth may be preserved in peace and security. There is none stronger than this champion of ours. "The Lord, strong and mighty."—Ps. xxiii. 8. "The Lord is a man of war; Omnipotent is His name." No keeper can be more watchful than He. "He

shall not slumber nor sleep, that keepeth Israel;" and doth all with that care and love, as if it were to keep the apple of His own eye, as Moses speaketh.—Deut. xxxii. 10. Oh, what a happiness is it to be under the protection of such a guardian!

Consider 2.—This guardian of yours will enter to-day in the holy Eucharist, the castle, or fortress, of your soul, to visit, strengthen, or defend it against your mortal enemy, the devil, who surrounds it day and night, seeking how he may destroy it. For, this divine banquet, or table, as David saith, is chiefly instituted as a fence against our enemies: "Thou hast prepared a table before me, against them that afflict me."—Ps. xxii. 5. Hence, conceive a great confidence in your guardian, and as great a desire of the happy hour wherein you are to receive Him.

Consider 3.—In what manner you may best entertain this guardian. You must be sure to cast out of your heart whatsoever may offend His pure eyes, lest otherwise, being offended at His entrance, He presently leave you, and deliver you over to your enemies. Deliver Him up the keys of your castle, that He may freely dispose of you and yours in all things, and upon all occasions. Ask pardon for your former offences; say with the prophet, "Keep me, O Lord, from the hand of the wicked: and from unjust men deliver me."—Ps. cxxxix. 5.

MONDAY.

CHRIST IS LED FROM CAIPHAS TO PILATE.

Consider 1.—"And when morning was come, all the chief priests and ancients of the people took counsel against Jesus, that they might put Him to death."—Matt. xxvii. 1. How diligent are the sons of darkness in prosecuting their wicked designs, scarcely giving themselves time to sleep or rest? Oh, that you were as zealous in the service of God! Think how welcome to our blessed Lord was that last morning, in which He was to perfect the work of our redemption. Ponder how, being now in full council, they examine our Lord over again, condemn Him as a blasphemer, pronounce Him guilty of death, and finally deliver Him over to the secular power to be executed.

Consider 2.—"And the whole multitude of them rising

up, led Him to Pilate."—Luke xxiii. 1. Think what a heavy journey this was to our blessed Lord. By this time the whole town was full of what had passed the night before, and in a longing expectation of the result of the high council; and now they see the captive hurried along by their doors, and accompanied by their high priests and elders, as so many unquestionable witnesses and proclaimers of His guilt. Our blessed Lord is held and treated by all as a notorious malefactor, and entertained all along as He passed with loud shouts and clamours; with scoffs, with reproaches, and with barbarous insolences of the rude and enraged people; and even those who before held Him in veneration as a great prophet and their Messias, now hold themselves as miserably seduced, and Him for a grand impostor. Who ever did, or could suffer so much in His reputation?

Consider 3.—Being come to Pilate's court, they "went not into the hall," it being the habitation of a Gentile, "that they might not be defiled, but that they might eat the pasch."—John xviii. 28. Oh, superstitious hypocrisy! They pretend religion and conscience in a small matter, while they are actually contriving murder and sacrilege. "They strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel."—Matt. xxiii. 34. Yet, would to God you were as nice and zealous in point of purity, when you come to eat the true pasch in the holy Eucharist, and would not thrust yourself in after so distracted a manner, and full of worldly cogitation.

TUESDAY.

CHRIST IS ACCUSED BEFORE PILATE.

Consider 1.—Pilate having brought Jesus forth to the people, and demanded what accusations they had against Him, "They began to accuse Him." 1. As a seditious person: "We have found this man perverting our nation"—Luke xxiii. 2,—who always taught and practised obedience, and did good to all. 2. As "forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar," who, notwithstanding, was known to pay tribute for Himself, though otherwise exempt. And 3, for "saying that He is Christ the King."—Luke xxiii. 2. And yet (though He were truly so) when they would have made Him King, He fled and hid Himself. Learn hence

what "liars the sons of men are in their balances"—Ps. xli. 10,—and how easy a matter it is to calumniate the innocent.

Consider 2.—Christ our Lord could easily have cleared Himself with a word, but would answer all his accusations with silence, "so that the governor wondered exceedingly" —Matt. xxvii. 14,—fulfilling thereby that of the Psalmist, "I have set a guard to my mouth, when the sinner stood against Me."—Ps. xxxviii. 2. O that you would do the same, when others rise up against you! Know that an innocent life is the best plea; and that true courage and fortitude consist in silence, and contempt of injuries and affronts, committing our cause to God, according to that of the prophet, "In silence and in hope shall your strength be."—Isa. xxx. 15.

Consider 3.—Pilate, laying hold of the last accusation, asked Jesus whether He were King of the Jews, who answered, "Thou sayest;" but withal, "My kingdom is not of this world"—Luke sup. John xviii. 36,—not of worldly greatness, pomp, and state, but of poverty, contempt, obedience, humility, and the cross. "God took His reign from the cross." Think whether you belong to His kingdom; for if you are of the world, that is, if you mind and seek the things of this world, you are none of His. "They are not of the world," saith Christ of His disciples, "as I also am not of the world."—John xvii. 14. Learn hence to have a high value of the cross, humility, etc.

WEDNESDAY.

CHRIST IS SENT TO HEROD.

Consider 1.—Pilate sought what he could to set Christ at liberty; for, saith he, "I find no cause in this Man." The Pharisees urge the more, saying, "He stirreth up the people," etc., "beginning from Galilee to this place"—Luke xxiii. 5,—whence he taketh occasion to send Him to Herod, as one belonging to his jurisdiction, but withal bound as a malefactor, guarded with soldiers, and accompanied by the priests His accusers. Thus was our blessed Lord posted from one tribunal to another, and exposed to the public view and scorn of the whole city. Good God!

how were the former affronts and insolences redoubled upon Him, and that of Jeremias verified to the full: "All they that passed by the way have clapped their hands at Thee; they have hissed, and wagged their head."—Lam. ii. 15.

Consider 2.—Christ at first is civilly entertained by Herod, who hoped to see Him work some miracle; but our Lord abhorred his lewdness, and would not comply with his curiosity, nor owe His life, which He so much desired to lay down, to his favour and courtesy, nor return one single word to his questions; and though "the chief priests and the scribes stood by, earnestly accusing Him"—Luke xxiii. 10,—He made no answer. Admire and imitate the courage and constancy of His mind, which could neither be bent by flattery, nor overcome by ill-usage, and learn withal to be reserved, and not familiar with persons of a lewd life, without certain hopes of gaining them.

Consider 3.—"And Herod, with his army, set Him at nought; and mocked Him, putting on Him a white garment." Ponder, how Christ our Lord, the eternal wisdom of God, is held for a fool, and one that, out of simplicity, had called Himself King, and is treated as such by the king and his whole court, delighting themselves with flouting and scoffing at Him. And in this plight He is sent back to Herod, and proclaimed all along as He went for a fool and fantastical king. Good Lord, is this the way You choose to cure my pride, confound my arrogance! With how much truth did the apostle say, "If any man among you seem to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise."—1 Cor. iii. 18.

THURSDAY.

BARABBAS IS PREFERRED BEFORE CHRIST.

Consider 1.—"Upon the solemn day the governor was accustomed to release to the people one prisoner, whom they would."—Matt. xxvii. 15. Hence, desirous to release Jesus, whose innocence was clearer than the sun, he compares Him to a most wicked felon, that was guilty of both sedition and murder; offering them their choice which of the two they would have freed. Think what a comparison this was, of light with darkness, of a murderer with the Author of life;

of a common robber with a most munificent benefactor, and giver of all good. And yet Christ disdained it not.

Consider 2.—The foolish and most unjust demand of the people, "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas." —Luke xxiii. 18. It was a foul disgrace and ignominy to be matched with so notorious a villain, but much greater to be set behind him. Now was truly fulfilled that of the prophet: "I am a worm, and no man, the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people."—Ps. xxi. 7. What are the judgments of the world? What wise man would rely on them, or care whether they praise or reprove? The like judgment to that of the Jews you pass, as often as you sin mortally, preferring in your heart and affection, some momentary delight to an infinite good, some vile creature to the Creator, and even a Barabbas to Christ.

Consider 3.—Pilate demanded, "What shall I do then with Jesus?"—Matt. xxvii. 22. The people cry out, saying, "Crucify Him."—Luke xxiii. 21. Think with what modesty and patience Christ received these unjust demands, not uttering the least word against them. Often ask yourself this question, what will you do with Jesus? Will you esteem, love, serve, and honour Him, as you ought, or rather choose to afflict, injure, and even crucify Him anew, for no less do all sinners, "Crucifying again (as the apostle saith) to themselves the Son of God, and making Him a mockery." —Heb. vi. 6.

FRIDAY.

THE SCOURGING AT THE PILLAR.—PART I.

Consider 1.—"Then therefore Pilate took Jesus, and scourged Him"—John xix. 1,—to the end he might in some part satisfy the rage of the Jews, and so set Him afterwards at liberty. Think notwithstanding how this sentence was, 1. Unjust, as being pronounced against Him who, by the judge's own confession, was innocent. 2. Infamous, it being the usual punishment of common slaves. 3. Cruel, it being decreed purposely to satiate the fury of the Jews. See how readily, for all that, and how cheerfully Christ accepts it, saying with the prophet, "I am ready for scourges."—And this to satisfy for your sins.

Consider 2.—So soon as the sentence was passed, how

impudently the soldiers stripped Him of His clothes, and bound Him to the pillar. Ponder the virginal bashfulness and shame our most chaste Lord was in, to see Himself exposed naked to the view of so great a multitude. See with what promptitude of obedience He stretched forth His arms to be bound, without making the least complaint or resistance, and learn hence how truly "meek and humble of heart" He is—Matt. xi. 29,—and you ought to be.

Consider 3.—The grievousness and cruelty of this scourging. 1. With respect to the instruments, which are credibly said to be of three sorts, to wit, thorny rods, hard sinews, and iron chains. 2. By reason of His delicate and tender complexion, being also much exhausted with His late bloody sweat, and ill-treatment, restless night, and painful journeys of that morning. 3. Through the cruel usage of His tormentors, who were set on and provoked by the Pharisees that stood by. 4. For the multitude of stripes, which, as is gathered out of St. Bridget's revelations, surmounted the number of five thousand; whereas the law of Moses allowed not full forty for any malefactor. Therefore saith Isaias, "From the sole of the foot unto the top of the head, there is no soundness therein."—Isa. i. 6.

SATURDAY.

THE SCOURGING AT THE PILLAR.—PART II.

Imagine you see Christ, our Lord, fast bound to the pillar, with a company of soldiers round about, tyrannising over Him with their whips; and consider the general circumstances, who, what, where, etc.

Who is He that is bound to the pillar? The only begotten Son of God. "The brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance."—Heb. i. 3. "He is higher than heaven, deeper than hell."—Job xi. 8. "The most high Creator Almighty and a powerful King, and greatly to be feared, who sitteth upon His throne, and is the God of dominion."—Ecclus. i. 8.

What? He is most inhumanly scourged, even to the exposure of His ribs and bones. No slave was ever so cruelly handled. "We have thought Him as it were a

leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted."—Isa. liii. 4.

Where? In the very middle of the world, in a most populous city, in the open court of the president; a whole legion of soldiers and a multitude of people looking on.

With what helps? Destitute of all human assistance, there was none to appear in His defence—none to comfort Him. "I looked about (saith He by the prophet), and there was none to help: I sought, and there was none to give aid."—Isa. lxiii. 5.

Wherefore? To satisfy for your sins; to make a bath of His precious blood, to wash and cleanse you withal. He took upon His shoulders stripes, which were due to you, whereby He made good that which the prophet saith: "He will overshadow thee with His shoulders."—Ps. xc. 4.

How? Of His own free choice, cheerfully, constantly, and silently. "I have given My body to the strikers."—Isa. l. 6. "As a lamb before His shearer He was dumb."—Isa. liii. 7.

When? In a most solemn feast of the Pasch, at which time an infinite number of people were assembled from all parts, to celebrate that mystery. All which made to His greater ignominy and confusion.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the Food of your Soul.

"COME, eat my bread, and drink the wine which I have mingled for you."—Prov. ix. 5. Consider 1.—What is read to-day in the gospel—John vi.,—how Christ, with five loaves, fed five thousand persons. He will come, this day, into your soul, to feed it with food, the sweetest, most precious and wholesome that ever was from the beginning of the world, His own sacred body and blood. "For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed"—John vi. 56,—and that you might not fear to come, He invites and

calls upon you: "Eat, O friends, and drink, and be inebriated, my dearly beloved."—Cant. v. 1.

Consider 2.—Three chief effects which corporal food worketh in the body. 1. It nourishes and strengthens. 2. It satiates. 3. It preserves life. In the same manner, as St. Thomas saith, "this divine food worketh in the soul."—Opusc. lviii. c. 91. It strengthens, giving grace and virtue to overcome vice. It satiates in begetting a loathing of worldly pleasures; for, as the wise man saith, "A soul that is full shall tread upon the honeycomb"—Prov. xxvii. 7,—that is, the delights of this world. Lastly, it preserves the spiritual life of the soul, and advanceth it to a blessed eternity. "He that eateth this bread (saith Christ) shall live for ever."—John vi. 59. Oh, what happiness is it to feed upon such bread!

Consider 3.—No meat, though ever so wholesome, does good but in a body well disposed, and taken in a clean stomach, as physicians affirm. Foul bodies, the more you nourish, the more you endanger, for in these all nourishment is turned into ill humours. See, therefore, that you duly prepare your soul, if you desire to taste how sweet our Lord is.—Ps. xxxiii. 9. Purge yourself of bad humours and evil affections, which hinder spiritual digestion. "Let a man prove himself; and so (that is, well proved and examined, and not otherwise) let him eat of that bread, and drink of the chalice."—1 Cor. xi. 28.

MONDAY.

THE CROWNING WITH THORNS.

Consider 1.—Christ, through His excessive love of suffering for us, not content with ordinary sufferings, permitted the soldiers to invent and practise upon Him an unheard-of kind of cruelty, what was lately done in Herod's court. 1. Therefore they strip Him of His own clothes, not without great torment, they being now saturated with the blood which ran from His wounds; then they put about Him a purple garment, in token of a mock king. See how He lets them abuse Him at their pleasure, without the least resistance or contradiction, being "become as a man not having reproach in His mouth."

Consider 2.—"And platting a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head."—Matt. xxvii. 29. O unheard-of torment! Some affirm that our Lord was wounded in seventy-two distinct places of His head by these thorns. "Go forth," my soul, "and see King Solomon in the diadem wherewith his mother," the synagogue, whereof he was according to the flesh, "hath crowned him"—Cant. iii. 11—and be astonished. Away with pride, away with all sensuality. "Be ashamed (saith St. Bernard) to be a delicate or nice member under a thorny head."—Bern. Ser. v. de Om. SS.

Consider 3.—"And they put a reed in His right hand. And bowing the knee before Him, they mocked Him, saying: Hail, King of the Jews. And spitting upon Him, they took the reed, and struck His head."—Matt. xxvii. 29, 30. What indignities are these—what torments! Ponder severally each one. See how the King of invincible spirit letteth not go, but keepeth still in His hand the sceptre of scorn and derision, to excite you to imitate. Now was fulfilled that which the prophet saith: "Behold my servant, etc. He shall not contend, nor cry out, neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. The bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not extinguish."—Matt. xii. 12; Isa. xlii. 1.

TUESDAY.

"BEHOLD THE MAN!"—PART I.

Consider 1.—"Jesus came forth bearing the crown of thorns, and the purple garment."—John xix. 5. Ponder how Pilate, to move the Jews to commiseration, brought forth our Lord, scourged, crowned as He was, and showed Him to the people. Think what a confusion it was to our Lord to be exposed thus as a spectacle to the Pharisees and His other enemies, and with what humility and patience our meek Lamb bore it. Oh, how are You, sweet Jesus, altered from what You lately were, when You appeared glorious upon Mount Thabor; or when You sat upon the cherubim, displaying the rays of Your Majesty in the highest heavens!

Consider 2.—Pilate said, "Behold the man!" He was so disfigured, that He could be scarcely taken for a man.

How true then were the words of the prophet: "There is no beauty in Him, nor comeliness; and we have seen Him, and there was no sightliness."—Isa. liii. 2. Who would not melt in tears to behold so sad a spectacle? And yet the hard-hearted Jews are nothing moved, but cry out the more, "Crucify Him, crucify Him." Oh, most beautiful of men, where is now that gracious aspect of Yours? where those rays of Your Divine countenance? "Do not consider Me (saith He) that I am brown, because the sun hath altered My colour."—Cant. i. 5. The sun and heat of Your charity, O Lord, hath, indeed, altered Your colour, and metamorphosed You into "a worm, and the reproach of men," for us.

Consider 3.—Pilate had long laboured to release Christ, but when he heard those words of the Jews: "If thou release this Man, thou art not Cæsar's friend," out of human respect and policy, lest, perhaps, he might be accused to Cæsar, he yielded Him unto them, against all justice. Have a care that like human respects prevail not with you against justice and equity. "He that feareth man, shall quickly fall (saith Solomon); he that trusteth in the Lord, shall be set on high."—Prov. xxix. 25.

WEDNESDAY.

"BEHOLD THE MAN!"—PART II.

Consider 1.—Having set Christ before your eyes with the crown of thorns on His head, and robe of scorn on His shoulders, as in the former meditation, and wounded all over from head to foot; imagine those words, "Behold the Man," spoken to you by the Holy Ghost, to the end you should more attentively contemplate Him; as much as if He should say, "He whom you behold in the outward shape of man, the same is God, and the Lord of all things, the Messias, Saviour, Doctor, and Pastor of men; who, for love of mankind, abased Himself beneath the condition of a slave, even to this lamentable plight."

Consider 2.—And imagine these same words spoken by the Eternal Father, proposing His Son as an example of all virtue for you to imitate. "Behold the Man." "Behold My servant whom I have chosen, My elect, My soul de-

lighteth in Him."—Matt. xii. 18; Isa. xlii. 1. "Look, and make it according to the pattern."—Exod. xxv. 40. He suffereth Himself to be condemned and scoffed at, to confound your pride; He is naked to correct your covetousness; He endureth excessive torments to satisfy for your sensuality; He turneth His cheek to the striker, to allay your anger and passion; and so of the rest. See, therefore, how you may imitate.

Consider 3.—These words may be spoken by you and by the whole Church, to the Eternal Father, offering Christ unto Him as a pacific host for all our sins. O, Eternal Father, "Behold the Man," who, in the name of all mankind, is come to pay Adam's ransom. "He is the propitiation for our sins."—1 John ii. 2. Therefore, "behold, O God, our Protector; and look on the face of Thy Christ."—Ps. lxxxiii. 10. Say the same often to yourself, with affections of compassion to your Lord and Saviour, of gratitude for suffering so much for love of you, of confidence and hope in so great a goodness, and of an ardent desire of imitating His example, and of suffering for love of Him.

THURSDAY.

CHRIST IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH.

Consider 1.—"As Pilate was sitting in the place of judgment, his wife sent to him"—Matt. xxvii. 19,—etc. Ponder the goodness of God, seeking divers ways to hinder the sins of men, as here He did, admonishing Pilate by his wife, and her in sleep, so that it may be justly objected to every sinner, "Destruction is thy own, O Israel."—Osee xiii. 9. Oh! how often hath He admonished you, speaking interiorly to your heart by holy inspirations, and exteriorly by preachers and superiors, forbidding you to do this or that, and yet you have not given over! Be careful, in future, to be more observant of His admonitions.

Consider 2.—"Pilate seeing that he had nothing prevailed," etc., "taking water, washed his hands, saying: I am innocent of the blood of this just man," and yet at the same time pronouncing sentence of death against Him. So, many pretend innocence in their life, but matter not their foul mouths; they will not offend their neighbour in their

outward actions, but scruple not to wound him with their tongues. Hear how the Jews cry out, "His blood be upon us, and upon our children." See how the heat of passion casteth a man headlong upon his own ruin; and have a care you are not overruled by any.

Consider 3.—"And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required."—Luke xxiii. 24. Think how unjust this sentence was, whereby the Author of Life was condemned to death, almost in the same breath wherewith He was pronounced "just," and innocent, and how wickedly Pilate acted in yielding to their unjust demands, against his own conscience, that you might learn to stand resolutely for justice, although you were to suffer a thousand deaths for it. Think with what shouts the people welcomed this sentence, and how the priests and Pharisees triumphed. Ponder what feeling Christ Himself had at that time, how He complained not, nor made any opposition, but with an undaunted mind, "delivered Himself to him that judged Him unjustly."—1 Pet. ii. 23.

FRIDAY.

CHRIST CARRIETH HIS CROSS.

Consider 1.—Sentence of death being pronounced, Christ is stripped of the purple garment, and clothed with His own, that He might be the better known in His own attire. The robe is taken off, not the crown, that He might not be without torment. So you likewise, if you desire to carry your cross after our Lord, must cast off the purple robe, that is, the love of the world, and put on the garments and livery of Christ, to wit, mildness and patience, according to that of the apostle, "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ."—Rom. xiii. 14.

Consider 2.—The cross being brought forth, ponderous in weight, and fifteen feet in length, our Saviour, doubtless exulted, and with greater reason and feeling than did afterward His disciple, St. Andrew, saluting the same in those or the like words: "Welcome, O precious cross, long-wished for, entirely beloved, and now at last prepare to my heart's desire"—Barrad. l. vii. c. 10,—He embraced, kissed, and took it upon His shoulder. O what shouting

and laughter was there among the people! For His greater ignominy there are led with Him two thieves; but with what difference of countenance and disposition of mind do they bear their several crosses! Think with yourself whom you will rather choose to imitate in carrying yours.

Consider 3.—"And bearing His own cross He went forth."—John xix. 17, etc. To wit, between two thieves, the crier all along proclaiming the respective causes of their death. So did Isaac formerly carry on His shoulders the wood for the holocaust, whereon He was to be sacrificed.—Gen. xxii. 6. See how the tender and feeble members of Christ shrink under the heavy burden. And how He stumbleth and falleth often to the ground, as He goeth, being quite wearied and exhausted by His torments. O angels of heaven! why do you not ease His burden? But your sins, O my soul, are more burdensome unto Him, for, "The Lord hath laid on Him (saith Isaias), the iniquity of us all."—Isa. liii. 6. Cease therefore to sin, that you may likewise cease to burden Him.

SATURDAY.

MEETING THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Consider 1.—Christ being sentenced to death, the news was probably carried to the Blessed Virgin by some of the disciples. Ponder how, according to St. Simeon's prophecy, her soul is here pierced with the sword of grief. She might say with David, "Who would grant me that I might die for thee, Jesus my son, my son Jesus?"—2 Kings xviii. 33. She resigned herself, notwithstanding, wholly to the will of God, according to that, "As it shall be the will in heaven, so be it done."—1 Mach. iii. 60.

Consider 2.—How, notwithstanding her grief, with an undaunted courage, she resolveth to go to the place of execution, to give her last embrace and farewell to her Blessed Son. She stays, therefore, with other women, by the way-side, where her Son was to pass by. Think what torment of mind she felt, when she first saw the crowd of people coming along with nails, hammers, ladders, and other such like instruments; what afterwards, when she beheld her most innocent Son coming between two thieves, laden

with a heavy cross, and cudgelled on by the soldiers to make haste. Condole with them both, and grieve for giving cause of their sufferings by your sins.

Consider 3.—Those words of Christ to the other women that followed: "Weep not over Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children," etc. "For if in the green wood they do these things, what shall be done in the dry?"—Luke xxiii. 31. Christ was a fresh, green, and juicy stock, full of all manner of grace and perfection; all we sinners are so many dry sticks, fit for nothing but the fire. If then the green wood was in the heat of sufferings for the sins of others, how will the dry, withered sticks burn in hell, or purgatory, for their own? And if God the Father did so severely chastise the offences of His slaves in the person of His most innocent Son, how much more will He punish them in the offenders themselves, when "that day" shall once come, "the day of wrath, calamity, and misery?" Weep, therefore, for yourself now, that you may not hereafter be forced to weep for ever.

PASSION SUNDAY.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as a hidden God.

"I WILL wait for the Lord, who hath hid His face from the house of Jacob; and I will look for Him."—Isa. viii. 17. Consider 1.—What is read to-day in the Gospel, how Christ hid Himself from the Jews that would have stoned Him. —John viii. 59. In memory whereof, the crosses this day are covered in the Churches, and Christ Himself, by Isaias, is termed a hidden God: "Verily, Thou art a hidden God, the God of Israel, the Saviour."—Isa. xlv. 5. And speaking of Him in His Passion, he saith: "His look was as it were hidden and despised."—Isa. liii. 3. He hid His divinity under the disguise of flesh and blood, His glory with the ignominy of His Passion, and both His flesh and divinity under the forms of bread and wine; so that the Psalmist, with reason, said of Him, "O how great is the multitude of

Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee?"—Ps. xxx. 20.

Consider 2.—In the Eucharist not only the flesh itself of Christ is hidden from our senses, for the greater merit of our faith, but also its virtue and efficacy; whence it is, that, not all who come to this sacrament, taste of its sweetness and delight; nay, it is no less than "death to the bad," as it is "life to the good." And even among the good, it worketh in everyone very different effects; so that it may deservedly be called "a hidden manna, and a white counter, and in the counter, a new name written, which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it."—Apoc. ii. 17.

Consider 3.—If you desire to know the sweetness of this hidden manna: 1. Be master of yourself and your appetites; for, "To him that overcometh (saith the Lord) I will give the hidden manna."—Apoc. ii. 17. 2. Be humble and little in your own eyes; "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones."—Matt. xi. 25. 3. Hide yourself in the holes of the rock"—Cant. ii. 14,—in Christ's wounds, and meditation of His Passion, and so you will come truly to "suck honey out of the rock."—Deut. xxxii. 13. For "The rock (as the apostle saith) was Christ."—1 Cor. x. 4.

MONDAY.

CRUCIFYING OUR LORD.—PART I.

Consider 1.—Being come to the place appointed for execution, our Lord is again stripped naked of His clothes in the sight of so great a multitude, before the insolent soldiers, and them that sought for nothing more than subject of scorn and laughter. He beareth patiently this ignominy due to our sins, and giveth us thereby, in His own person, a lively example of evangelical poverty. Then, to the end that no sense might be without its torment, "They gave Him wine to drink, mingled with gall. And when He had tasted, He would not drink."—Matt. xxvii. 34. "Not for the gall's sake (saith St. Ambrose), but He refuseth such bitterness as is mingled with wine." For our Saviour would swallow down the bitter cup of His Passion without the mixture of any sweetness. Be ashamed for seeking

dainties for your palate, and for murmuring when they are not afforded.

Consider 2.—The circumstance of place. It was a high hill, exposed to the view of all, for the greater ignominy; full of dead men's bones, for the greater horror and loathsomeness. Our Lord made choice of an obscure place to be born in, thereby to conceal His glory, but would die hanged up aloft, openly in the sight of all, and in the midst of the earth, as some observe for the greater infamy. How different, O Lord, are "Your thoughts from our thoughts, and Your ways from our ways!" We strive what we can to conceal whatsoever is in us that may turn to our disgrace, and divulge all that makes to our praise and commendation.

Consider 3.—The circumstance of time. On the most solemn festivity of Easter, at which time all the people were wont to flock to Jerusalem; in the very heat of noonday, to signify the fervour of His charity, wherewith, as with fire, His holocaust was consumed. For "He was offered because it was His own will"—Isa. liii. 7,—and at what time He would, and where He would, and with whom He would, but withal would do it in that manner, that He might teach us, by His own example, to contemn all things.

TUESDAY.

CRUCIFYING OUR LORD.—PART II.

Consider 1.—All things being now ready for His crucifixion, He is insolently thrown down by the executioner upon the cross. See how submissively He placeth Himself thereon; and, like Isaac, when "he lay on the altar upon a pile of wood"—Gen. xxii. 9,—offereth Himself in sacrifice to His Eternal Father. See how He stretcheth forth His hands to the holes whereto they were to be nailed, for Adam's stretching forth his to the forbidden fruit. Hear the hideous sound of the hammers knocking the nails into His sacred hands and feet. See the streams of blood running down upon the ground, and learn by the example of our Lord "to crucify your flesh, with its vices and concupiscences"—Gal. v. 24,—as the apostle teacheth.

Consider 2.—What excessive torment must our blessed Lord feel in those tender parts, and full of sinews, especially

being violently stretched out, and probably also disjointed to make them reach to the holes, so as to fulfil the words of the prophet: "They have dug My hands and My feet; they have numbered all My bones."—Ps. xxi. 18. Compassionate your dear Lord, and grieve for having been the cause of His torments by your sins. "Acknowledge, O man (saith St. Bernard), how grievous your sins are, for which it was necessary our Lord should be wounded."

Consider 3.—Our Lord, being nailed to the cross, is raised up on high, and violently let down again into the trench they had made to fasten the cross in, to the unspeakable increase of all His torments. O what a spectacle was this "to the world, to angels, and to men!"—1 Cor. iv. 9. Of compassion and astonishment to the angels; of scorn and derision to the wicked, and compunction and example to the just; and a sacrifice most acceptable to the Eternal Father. Fall at the feet of the crucifix, take up the sacred blood that falleth down, and speak what affection shall suggest.

WEDNESDAY.

CRUCIFYING OUR LORD.

Consider 1.—What Christ might do, say, or think, hanging on the cross, and in those dreadful torments, when He received no comfort either exteriorly from men, or interiorly in His soul. If He stirred His body, it was tormented afresh by the wounds of His hands and feet, whereon the whole weight of His body was suspended. If He moved His head, the thorns were stricken in the deeper; and yet not the least sigh, or moan, or complaint was heard to proceed from Him; but He offered all to His Eternal Father for your and others' sins.

Consider 2.—"And they that passed by blasphemed Him"—Matt. xxvii. 39,—the priests, the soldiers, and all sorts of men. They upbraided Him, 1. With want of power: "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." 2. With arrogancy, as vainly taking upon Him the title of King: "If He be the King of Israel, let Him come down." 3. As counterfeiting Himself Son of God, and presumptuously relying thereon: "He trusted in God, let Him now deliver Him, if He will," etc. 4. As boasting of Himself: "Vah!

Thou that destroyest the temple of God, and in three days dost re-build it." To all this He holdeth His peace, as a dumb sign or mark exposed to all manner of contradiction, so as to be "filled with reproaches."—Lam. iii. 30.

Consider 3.—Christ would not come down from the cross, nor shorten the durance of His pains, as easily He might, but would continue in them to the last breath, without admitting any manner of comfort; that you might also learn to persevere in good, even unto death. Take notice also that He suffered all this for our sins. "He was wounded for our iniquities, He was bruised for our sins."—Isa. liii. 5. Take heed therefore lest returning to sin, "you crucify again to yourself," as the apostle speaketh, and to your own ruin, "the Son of God."—Heb. vi. 6.

THURSDAY.

CHRIST'S FIRST WORD ON THE CROSS.

"*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*"

Consider 1.—Christ was given to the world by His Eternal Father as a doctor or master, to teach us the way of salvation: "This is My beloved Son, hear Him."—Luke ix. 35. Hear Him then from the cross, as His pulpit or chair, reading several admirable lessons unto you; and seek to prove a diligent disciple in His school, that you may say with the apostle, "I judged not myself to know anything among you, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."—1 Cor. ii. 2.

Consider 2.—Christ's first lesson is of loving our enemies, and of praying for them: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." He doth not call fire down from heaven upon His persecutors, as did Elias, nor curseth them, as Eliseus; but asketh pardon for His enemies, and as Isaias saith, "prayed for the transgressors"—Isa. liii. 12,—fulfilling by deeds what before He commended in words: "Pray for them that persecute and caluminate you."—Matt. v. 44. See whether you do so, not only for your enemies that persecute you, but for your familiars and neighbours, who may perhaps offend you with some light word or injury.

Consider 3.—More particularly each circumstance. Who

is it that prayeth? The Son of God. To whom doth He pray? His Eternal Father. Where? On the tree of the cross. At what time? When He was quite spent and exhausted with suffering, and now ready to die. In what manner? Not sitting or lying at His ease, but straight erected upon His feet, and stretching forth His hands. In what terms? Not many, but full of affection, and mingled with sighs, tears, and blood. For whom? For sinners, for His enemies, persecutors, and tormentors. What doth He ask? Mercy. Before whom? In the hearing of all, even His adversaries, that you might learn mildness and charity towards all, and on all occasions.

FRIDAY.

THE SECOND WORD.

"*This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise.*"

Consider 1.—It was none of the least injuries which our Saviour suffered, to hang between two thieves, as their ring-leader, making good that of the prophet: "And He was reputed with the wicked."—Isa. liii. 12. He was born between two beasts, and would die between two thieves, to give us an example of humility, though in heaven He be seated between the Father and the Holy Ghost. "Even He Himself (as St. Ambrose speaketh) was a thief by mystery, laying wait for the devil, to steal away His weapons"—Ambr. in Luc. xxiii.,—and on the cross robbed him of a thief. O Lord, rob me thus of my heart, that it may serve You alone.

Consider 2.—Those words of Christ—"This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise." Admire the riches of God's bounty and long-suffering. He takes up infamous robbers, and makes them His sons and heirs of His kingdom; and this at the first word, "This very day thou shalt be with Me." He giveth the thief incomparably more than he demanded of Him. He craved only a remembrance, and Christ promiseth him a kingdom; for, St. Ambrose saith, "Our Lord ever bestowed more than is demanded of Him, and His grant is larger than the petition." Who would not love and willingly serve such a Lord?

Consider 3.—Three several sorts of sufferers in these

three, that were put to the same death of the cross; some deservedly, but impatiently, as the bad thief; others, though deservedly, yet patiently, as the good thief; others, again, both undeservedly, and withal patiently, as Christ our Lord. Seek to be one of the two latter sorts; at least, be of the second, and confess with holy Job, "I have sinned, and indeed, I have offended: and I have not received what I have deserved"—Job xxxiii. 27;—for you are truly worthy of many stripes.

SATURDAY.

THE THIRD WORD.

"Woman, behold thy son."

Consider 1.—"There stood beside the cross of Jesus, His Mother."—John xix. 25. Ponder how His blessed Mother and other devout persons stood near the cross; whence you may learn, that the lovers of Christ are also lovers of His cross, and the nearer they stand to this, the more they show their love to Him. Think how His blessed Mother was afflicted when she saw her Son so barbarously used. "Your Son, O Virgin (saith St. Bonaventure), suffered in His body, you in mind. The several wounds which were all over His body met together in one within your heart." Yet she gave not the least sign of impatience, nor did she say anything unbecoming her person; that you might learn to compassionate Christ together with her, and withal to suffer your own adversities with courage.

Consider 2.—"Woman, behold thy son." He calleth her woman, not mother, that He might not seem to regard flesh and blood, who was wholly employed in doing the will of His Eternal Father, and that He might not the more deeply wound her afflicted heart with the tender name of Mother. He commends unto her His disciple, St. John, and in him all Christians; that she, who is so powerful with God, might be a mother to us. She willingly accepted the charge, so that she is deservedly styled by the saints, "The Mother of the living."—St. Epiph. lib. iii. hom. 78. Recommend yourself, therefore, unto her, saying with the Church, "Show yourself a mother."—Hymn, "Ave Maris Stella."

Consider 3.—"Behold thy Mother." To wit, so as to have recourse unto her, as a child to his mother, and that you love, respect, and assist her as your parent; teaching us herein to be careful of our parents to our last breath. Observe, how He recommends Virgin to Virgin. Be, therefore, a lover of chastity, if you desire to be ranked among the sons of Mary. For "like to like;" and as the wise man saith, "Every man will associate himself to his like." Imitate St. John in devotion to your sacred Mother, who, "from that hour took her to his own."

PALM SUNDAY.

HOLY COMMUNION.

"Behold thy King cometh to thee, meek."—Matt. xxi. 5. —Consider 1.—What is read to-day in the gospel, "Behold thy King cometh to thee, meek." "Thou art Thyself, my King and my God, who commandest the saving of Jacob."—Ps. xliii. 5. At other times we may take Him as the "King of Majesty, the King of Glory, a powerful King, and exceeding dreadful." But in His passion He would show Himself a mild King. "Who, when He suffered, He threatened not," etc.—1 Pet. ii. 23. And, therefore, to-day sitteth upon an ass, a gentle, tame beast; who, at other times, is said to "sit upon the cherubim, and walk upon the wings of winds."—Ps. xcviii. 1; Ps. ciii. 3. With this mildness He will come to you in the Eucharist, wherein, that you might not dread His majesty, He lieth hid under the disguise and form of most delicious food, and suffereth Himself, with admirable patience and long-suffering, to be taken into the mouths and breasts even of His enemies.

Consider 2.—How much you ought to wish that this King may come and reign in your soul, and subdue all your unruly passions, for He is both of infinite wisdom and power to govern and protect you; and as infinitely rich and bountiful to reward and crown you. "The Lord ruleth me (saith David), and I shall want nothing."—Ps. xxii. 1. Wherefore, if you will want nothing, deliver yourself to be ruled by Him.

Consider 3.—You must duly prepare your soul to receive your King, so that He may come to visit you in His mildness, not in His fury and indignation. Go forth, therefore, to meet Him like the children of Jerusalem, carrying with you fresh green branches of good works; spread your garments in His way, and cast under His feet, at least in affection, all earthly and worldly concerns; sound forth and sing His praises, and say with the prophet, "I will extol Thee, O God, my King; and I will bless Thy name for ever."—Ps. cxlv. 1. And "hearken to the voice of my prayer, O my King and my God."—Ps. v. 3.

MONDAY.

THE FOURTH WORD.

"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"—Consider 1.—"About the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying: My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"—Matt. xxvii. 46. A loud cry and voice are signs of excessive grief, for our Lord was left alone in His sufferings, which continued a long time with exceeding great torment; destitute of all manner of comfort, which might arise from the inferior part of the soul; forsaken by His own people, even His disciples; foreseeing withal, that the greatest part of the world would forsake Him to whom all those bitter torments of His would prove in vain; so that now was truly fulfilled the words of the prophet: "Great as the sea is thy destruction: who shall heal thee?"—Lam. ii. 13.

Consider 2.—Christ our Lord could easily have freed Himself from these interior anguishes of mind, by giving way to the joys of the beatific vision, which possessed the superior powers of His soul, to overflow also the inferior; but would endure them all, that He might be the more like to us in all things, and withal to instruct us how to behave ourselves in time of desolation, dryness in devotion, and trouble of mind, which are incident to persons even of the greatest virtue and perfection. Learn, therefore, to stand resolutely in like occasions, to betake yourself to prayer, and to hold out with patience in expectation of God's divine assistance: "For it shall surely come (saith the prophet), and it shall not be slack."—Hab. ii. 3.

Consider 3.—If God the Father left His beloved Son in this manner, wonder not if He seem to leave you to yourself for some time without all comfort. Nay, such desolations are signs of His love, sent us for trial of our constancy, and enlargement of our crown. Whence it is that David said, "Prove me, O Lord, and try me; burn my reins and my heart."—Ps. xxv. 2. Offer yourself in like manner; only beg of Him with the same prophet, that when He leaves you, He "forsakes you not utterly."

TUESDAY.

THE FIFTH WORD.

"I thirst."

Consider 1.—"Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, etc., said, I thirst."—John xix. 28. Christ had a double thirst, corporal and spiritual. His corporal thirst was most vehement, and inflamed with His last night's restless watching, weariness, interior affliction, and effusion of so much blood. Our blessed Lord would also suffer this torment for our instruction, neither would He quench His own thirst, who "brought forth water out of the rock"—Ps. lxxvii. 16; Judges xv. 19—for His people that thirsted in the desert, and afforded Samson in his thirst drink out of the jaw-bone of an ass, that you might learn to suffer hunger, thirst, and other afflictions.

Consider 2.—"And they putting a sponge full of vinegar about hyssop," on the top of a cane, offered it to His mouth, not to refresh, but to torment Him anew. What a potion was this for the Son of God, "who giveth food to all flesh, and filleth with blessing every living creature!"—Ps. cxxxv. 25; Ps. cxliv. 16. How much better drink doth He afford us of His own precious blood in the holy Eucharist? "And Your chalice inebriating, O Lord, how goodly is it!"—Ps. xxii. 5. Be ashamed for being so nice in your drink, and perhaps complaining also if it happened to be anything stale, harsh, unpleasant, etc.

Consider 3.—Christ's spiritual thirst, which was chiefly of three things: 1. Of obeying His heavenly Father, and fulfilling whatsoever was written of Him. 2. Of suffering yet more, to which purpose He openly proclaimed His thirst,

whereby He might be the more tormented, not refreshed. 3. Of effectually redeeming all mankind, for whom He died. Strive to imitate Him in all these. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice; for they shall have their fill."—Matt. v. 6.

WEDNESDAY.

CHRIST'S LAST WORDS, AND DEATH.

Consider 1.—"Jesus therefore when He had taken the vinegar, said: It is consummated."—John xix. 30. He congratulated with Himself, 1. For having performed the will of His heavenly Father, "becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross."—Phil. ii. 8. 2. For having fulfilled the prophecies and figures that were of Him, of which He said, "I am not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it."—Matt. v. 18. 3. For being come to an end of all His labours, which He endured to the very last, drinking up the chalice prepared for Him, to the bottom, dregs and all. Well, therefore, might He say to His Eternal Father, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do," etc.—John xvii. 4. "And I come to Thee."—*Ib.* 11.

Consider 2.—The last word: "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." He said it "with a loud voice"—Luke xxiii. 46,—in sign of triumph over death, sin, and the devil. So Gideon, with broken pitchers and loud cry, proclaimed victory over the Madianites.—Judges vii. 20. He teacheth us, withal, how to recommend ourselves to God at the hour of death, and what we ought chiefly to be careful of at that time, casting off all thoughts of worldly affairs. Beseech our Lord that death may not so steal upon you, as to prevent these or the like good affections.

Consider 3.—"And bowing His head, He gave up the ghost."—John xix. 30. O unspeakable mystery! The sun of glory is eclipsed; the temple of the living God is dissolved; the Author of life yields to death! Oh, how truly does the apostle say, "You are bought with a great price." Wherefore, "glorify and bear God in your body"—1 Cor. vi. 20,—but much more in your mind. See that you be not more insensible than the senseless creatures themselves. "The sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was rent in the midst."—Luke xxiii. 45. "The earth quaked, and the rocks were rent, and the graves were opened," etc.—Matt.

xxvii. 51, 52. Be ashamed and confounded for your sins; tear asunder the double veil of self-love and will, that hangeth between God and you; tremble at the account you are to give for Christ's death and passion; rend your hard heart by due contrition; and lastly, quit the loathsome grave of sin and lukewarmness.

MAUNDY THURSDAY.

HOLY COMMUNION.—*Consider Christ as your Redeemer.*

"ARISE, sit up, O Jerusalem; loose the bonds from off thy neck, etc. You were sold gratis, and you shall be redeemed without money."—Isa. lii. 2, 3. Consider 1.—The benefit of our redemption, which the Church doth most particularly solemnize all this holy time. We are all under the tyranny of the devil; cast off from the face of God, by demerit of our sins; nor was there any one that could free us from this slavery; no creature being sufficient to pay our ransom. We were all lost for ever. When behold! the only begotten Son of God "sent redemption to His people"—Ps. cx. 9,—offering Himself in sacrifice for our sins; being truly "our Father, our Redeemer," as Isaias speaketh, "From everlasting," such "is His name."—Isa. lxiii. 16.

Consider 2.—At what rate we were redeemed, namely, "Not with corruptible things as gold or silver, but with His own precious blood."—1 Pet. i. 18, 19. And whereas one single drop had been abundantly sufficient, He would, notwithstanding, pour it all forth, and suffer so many bitter torments, "Because with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him plentiful redemption."—Ps. cxxix. 7. Besides, not content with redeeming us once, He hath left Himself unto us in the Eucharist, so that although you should often fall into the enemy's hands, you might have wherewithal to free yourself again. O unspeakable love! Return the best thanks you are able.

Consider 3.—This Redeemer will come to-day into your soul, to free you from the relics of your former captivity; and to loose the bands of vicious habits, if any be in you. Prepare yourself, therefore, to meet Him. Bestow yourself, as a thing none of your own, but wholly His who bought you. "You are not your own (saith the apostle), for you are bought with a great price."—1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. Where-

fore, render yourself wholly of Him, whose you are, and cast off all affection to creatures. Say with the Psalmist, "I am Thine, save Thou me"—Ps. cxviii. 94, and with the Church, pray, "that you may feel in yourself the benefit of His redemption."

GOOD FRIDAY.

A SUMMARY OF OUR LORD'S PASSION.

Imagine yourself to stand at the foot of the cross on Mount Calvary, and to hear our Saviour call out in these words of the prophet, "O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be sorrow like to My sorrow."—Lam. i. 12. Ponder attentively the whole Passion according to four particular circumstances.

1. How ignominious it was. He was hanged as a thief, as one unworthy either to live or die on the earth. He was condemned at four different tribunals, hurried along the streets, and pointed at as a blasphemer, seducer, impostor, glutton, madman, and fool. What say you to all this, that are so nice of your reputation?

2. How grievous it was. 1. By reason of His delicate and tender complexion. 2. Because He would admit of no manner of comfort, either interior or exterior. 3. That He was left all alone and forsaken by His friends: "I am become a stranger to my brethren, and an alien to the sons of my mother"—Ps. lxviii. 9,—the synagogue. 4. Upon the cross, if He would seek any ease by moving or turning Himself, the whole weight of His body lay the heavier upon the wounds of His hands and feet, with an increase of His torments. If He leaned back His head, the thorns were striking deeper in. If He thirsted, His drink was vinegar and gall, etc. Good God, what torment!

3. How universal it was, both in body and mind. The words of the prophet were truly fulfilled in Him: "From the sole of the foot unto the top of the head, there is no soundness."—Isa. i. 6. His head was pierced with thorns; His face buffeted with fists, and defiled with spittle; His eyes black and blue; His lips swollen; His teeth struck out; His beard plucked off; His ears rent with pulls and pinches; His shoulders torn with stripes; His side pierced with a lance; His hands and feet bored with nails; His whole body imbrued in His own blood.

4. How lasting it was. His whole life was a continual suffering: "I am poor, and in labours (saith He by His prophet) from my youth."—Ps. lxxxvii. 16. But those things which He suffered from His last supper to his last breath, were intolerable, and lasted all that night and day following, for about twenty hours together.

EASTER EVE.

BURIAL OF OUR LORD.

Consider 1.—After our Lord was dead, His sacred body was taken down from the cross with great devotion and tears, by Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, who laid it in His Mother's arms; whereby that of the Canticles was fulfilled: "A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me: He shall abide between my breasts."—Cant i. 12. Think what expressions of grief and sorrow, what sighs and tears passed from her. Ponder what was said and done at that time by her and her devout companions. See that your beloved Lord be also to you a bundle of myrrh.

Consider 2.—Grief and love having acted their parts, they embalm the sacred corpse, and wrap it up in a clean winding sheet. Our Lord is delighted with purity even in His grave, that you might learn diligently to cleanse your heart, as often as you receive Him in the Holy Eucharist. Our Lord will have His mystical members embalmed, especially with the myrrh of mortification, that, with the apostle, "Always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies."—2 Cor. iv. 10. Think how you may put this in practice.

Consider 3.—Our Lord being buried, every one betakes himself to his own house, for none was permitted by the keepers to remain at the sepulchre. Think in what solitude the blessed Mother and other devout persons were, and how they gave themselves wholly to prayer, "Looking for the blessed hope and coming of the glory of the great God."—Tit. ii. 13. The Blessed Virgin, doubtless, comforted herself with that of the psalm: "In the evening weeping shall have place, and in the morning gladness."—Ps. xxix. 6. Do you likewise in desolation have recourse to prayer, and learn to put your trust in God.

MEDITATIONS

CONCERNING

THE MYSTERIES AFTER OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION.

THINGS TO BE OBSERVED.

THE Meditations upon the Mysteries after our Lord's Resurrection, appertain to the Unitive way.—This being an unity of our will to the Divine will of God, by way of affection, maketh that our will, as it were, going forth of herself, layeth hold of the goodness of God represented unto it, and adhereth unto Him, and by this adhesion is united with Him, according to the apostle, "He who is joined to the Lord, is one spirit."—1 Cor. vi. 17. Hence, this unitive way hath divers affections properly belonging unto it, which we may make use of in the ensuing meditations. The chief are these following:

1.—Admiration of God's majesty, whom we contemplate, and of His attributes and perfections.

2.—Joy and content, that God is so absolutely perfect in Himself, good to others, and so admirable in His works.

3.—Praise and thanksgiving for His gifts and benefits, with desire of seeing and enjoying Him, honouring and obeying Him.

4.—Zeal for God's glory, and good of souls, wishing that all the world might come to know, love, and serve Him.

5.—Confidence in His goodness and providence, together with a filial respect, standing in fear of being separated from Him, or of committing anything which may justly offend so great a Majesty! and bewailing all the sins whereby we have incurred at any time His just indignation.

6.—Desire of those heavenly things we contemplate; so that whatsoever is upon earth may seem but dust unto us, while we look up to heaven, saying with the prophet,

"How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord."—Ps. lxxxiii. 2. And, "As the hart panteth after the fountains of waters, so my soul panteth after Thee, O God."—Ps. xli. 2.

By these, and such like affections, let us endeavour to obtain, that, "Beholding the glory of the Lord," etc., we may be "transformed," as the apostle speaketh, "into the same image, from glory to glory"—2 Cor. iii. 18; that is, that we may become like unto Him, by the union of our wills; increasing daily more and more in the knowlege of Him, till at length, passing from the imperfections of this life and pilgrimage, we arrive at the perfections and glory of our native country and beatific vision.

EASTER SUNDAY.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as our Resurrection.

"Rise thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead: and Christ shall enlighten thee."—Ephes. v. 14. Consider 1.—The manner wherewith Christ raised His body out of the sepulchre of deformity, rendering it glorious. Ponder what a difference there is between a body that is dead, pale, wan, destitute of all sense and motion, and the same when it is invested with the array and endowments of glory. The same difference is between the soul in sin, and in the state of grace; and almost the same between torpidity and fervour. For in the state of torpidity, the soul is as it were in a slumber, and void of all heroic motion, she is insensible of things appertaining to God; and being possessed with innumerable fancies, pursueth vain trifles and dreams, instead of real and solid good. She thinks herself in a good state, when in truth she is like that man in the Apocalypse, "miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."—Apoc. iii. 17.

Consider 2.—Christ is ready to raise us out of these miserable states; therefore He saith, "I am the Resurrection and the Life."—John xi. 25. To wit, the cause and

Author of both, and as well of the soul as of the body. O what a benefit it is, and how infinitely to be valued, to be raised from the death of sin and grave of stupidity, and to be placed in the clear light of the children of God, that walk and work with fervour. The same will Christ bestow upon you, this day, in the Holy Eucharist, if you hinder Him not. For, therefore, He is called the "bread of life:" and as we owe unto Him the resurrection of our bodies in the last day, so do we now the resurrection and reviving of our souls.

Consider 3.—The signs of our rising with Christ are, to seek and mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon earth. So the apostle saith, "If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above," etc.—Col. iii. 1. Seek, therefore, and affect only heavenly things, and as "Christ rising again from the dead, dieth now no more"—Rom. vi. 9; so you being raised from the state of lukewarmness to fervour, have a care you fall not into a relapse.

MONDAY.

OUR LORD'S RESURRECTION.

Consider 1.—There having now passed time sufficient to evidence the certainty of His death, on the third day, early in the morning, our Lord hastened to bring forth the holy fathers out of Limbo, to comfort His blessed mother, and desolate disciples, and illustrate the whole world with the rays of His glory. What jubilee were the holy fathers in, at that time, when they saw that blessed hour of their delivery come, which they had longed for so many ages! Free, O Lord, in like manner, my soul from the lion's mouth, and from the deep lake, and let not my enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, ever domineer over me.

Consider 2.—How, when Christ's soul was come out of Limbo to the body in the sepulchre, He showed it to the holy fathers, as it lay, pale and wan, all mangled and disfigured; that they might see how much He had suffered for them, and at what rate He had redeemed them. Then He re-united it to the soul, and that of David was fulfilled: "The Lord hath reigned: He is clothed with beauty; the Lord is clothed with strength, and hath girded Himself."—

Ps. xcii. 1. For He took upon Him the four properties of a glorified body. 1. Of brightness, rendering it brighter than the sun itself. 2. Of subtility, to penetrate the sepulchre, and whatsoever other corporal substance. 3. Of agility, to move itself to the remotest places in a moment. 4. Of immortality, so as to be incapable of dying, or suffering any more. Being thus crowned with glory, He might say to His Eternal Father, with David, "Thou hast turned for Me My mourning to joy; Thou hast cut My sackcloth, and hast compassed Me with gladness."—Ps. xxix. 12.

Consider 3.—How the Eternal Father congratulateth with His Son, as also do the angels of Heaven, and the fathers of Limbo, for the re-union of His body; all crying out as with one voice, "The Lamb that was slain, is worthy to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and benediction."—Apoc. v. 12. Join you with them, and say, "This is the day which the Lord hath made, let us be glad, and rejoice therein."—Ps. cxvii. 24. Learn hence that the tribulations of the just are but short, but their glory everlasting, and that, "if we suffer with Christ, we shall also be glorified with Him."—Rom. viii. 17.

TUESDAY.

OUR LORD'S APPEARANCES: FIRST TO HIS BLESSED MOTHER.

Consider 1.—Christ three different ways manifested His resurrection. 1. By saints who arose in their bodies, and appeared to many. 2. By angels at the sepulchre. 3. In His own person, "shewing Himself alive by many proofs, for forty days appearing," etc.—Acts i. 3. After the same manner, He is wont to manifest Himself to His devout servants, by spiritual men, by their angel guardians, and immediately by Himself. "He that loveth Me," etc., "I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him."—John xiv. 21. Love Him, therefore, that He may manifest Himself also to you.

Consider 2.—Christ first of all appeared to His blessed Mother, according to the pious belief of the Church; that she who had drunk most of the bitter chalice of His passion, should be the first in partaking the joy of His resur-

rection. "As you are partakers of the sufferings, so shall you be also of the consolation."—2 Cor. i. 7. She did most certainly believe, and most ardently expect the hour of His resurrection, and said with David, "Arise, O my glory; arise, psaltery and harp"—Ps. lvi. 9,—and, therefore, she was not frustrated in her desire; that you might learn both fervently to desire heavenly things and also patiently to expect the time. "If He make any delay, wait for Him; for He shall surely come, and He shall not be slack"—Hab. ii. 3,—and will recompense His delay.

Consider 3.—What joy possessed the mother's heart, when she beheld her Son? What holy embraces passed between them? What was said or done on both sides? Doubtless the holy fathers, Adam, Abraham, Moses, David, and others, did congratulate the Virgin, and say, "Thou daughter art blessed of our Lord, for that by thee we have partaken the fruit of life." Do you likewise congratulate with her, from your heart, and say with the Church, "Rejoice, thou Queen of Heaven, Alleluia; because He whom thou didst deserve to bear, Alleluia, is risen again, as He said, Alleluia; pray unto God for us, Alleluia."—Regina Cœli.

WEDNESDAY.

ANGELS APPEAR TO THE WOMEN AT THE SEPULCHRE.

"And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they come to the sepulchre." Consider 1.—The devotion of these three women. 1. They bought spices, not sparing any cost to perform the last obsequies of their love, in anointing the corpse of their Lord. 2. For the same purpose they rise very early, and "when it was yet dark."—John xx. 1. Learn to spare no labour nor cost in the service of God, according to your ability; and as the wise man saith, "We ought to prevent the sun to bless God, and adore Him at the dawning of the light."—Wisd. xvi. 28. See whether you be so early in the morning employed in the divine service.

Consider 2.—"And they said one to another, Who shall roll back the stone from the door of the sepulchre?" Among their pious discourses on the way, they were about removing the stone. But when they came, "they saw the stone rolled

back." So we fancy to ourselves many difficulties in the way of virtue and perfection, which, notwithstanding, when we come to practise, Almighty God doth facilitate unto us, and take away. "And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side." God rewardeth the women's devotion with the vision of an angel. "And his countenance was as lightning, and his raiment as snow."—Matt. xxviii. 3. Who would not wish to dwell with such happy company?

Consider 3.—"Be not affrighted; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified." Among the titles of our Lord, now in glory, is also ranked that of being crucified, that you might learn, with the apostle, not to "glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," etc.—Gal. vi. 14; and even not to "know anything, but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."—1 Cor. ii. 2. Think what joy the holy women were in, to hear that Christ was risen, and how "they went out quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, running to tell His disciples."—Matt. xxviii. 8.

THURSDAY.

CHRIST APPEARETH TO MARY MAGDALEN.

"Mary stood at the sepulchre, weeping."—John xx. 11. Consider the fervent love of this pious woman, and constancy in persevering still at the sepulchre, whereas the others returned back, whereby she deserved to see our Lord before the rest. For, as St. Gregory saith, "The virtue," value, or worth, "of a good work, is perseverance." Learn hence, how to seek our Lord, when by sin He is taken from you, or when by desolation He withdraweth Himself; you must do it with sighs, tears, and ardent love, whereby you will come to "find Him whom your soul loveth."—Cant. iii. 4.

Consider 2.—Angels appear unto Mary, and ask her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" but could not satisfy her mind or affection; for no worldly comfort is able to content the soul that truly seeketh God. Then Christ Himself appeareth, but first in the shape of a gardener, so she knew Him not, saying, "Sir, if Thou hast taken Him hence, tell me where Thou hast laid Him; and I will take Him away."

Great was the force of her love; she excepted no place, feared no danger, but was ready to seek her Lord upon any terms. See whether your love be such.

Consider 3.—"Jesus saith to her, Mary." Our Lord doth often conceal His presence, and seemeth to be afar off from His servants, when He is near at hand. He conceals Himself under a disguise, the better to try our love and inflame our desires, but discovereth Himself at last, and, as Sara said, "After tears and weeping Thou pourest in joyfulness."—Tob. iii. 22. Beseech our Lord, that He would vouchsafe to be so intimate and familiar with you, as to call you by your name, and so speak to your heart, that you may come to know His voice, and with blessed Magdalen, be more and more inflamed with His love.

FRIDAY.

OUR LORD APPEARETH TO THE OTHER WOMEN.

Consider 1.—While the holy women, among whom probably was St. Mary Magdalen, were on their return from the sepulchre to the city, Christ met them in the way, and saluted them, saying, "All hail." Ponder here the great goodness of our Lord, affording comfort in a most seasonable time, and not disdaining the weaker sex. Ponder also that word, "All hail," which the angel Gabriel likewise used to the Blessed Virgin, and did work in their hearts what it did outwardly signify. O Lord, speak so to my soul. "Let Thy voice sound in my ears; for Thy voice is sweet and Thy face comely."—Cant. ii. 14.

Consider 2.—"But they came up, and took hold of His feet, and adored Him." They were permitted to touch and kiss His sacred feet. O with what reverence, and joy of heart did they do it. In reward of their good desires of anointing His sacred corpse in the sepulchre, they were themselves "anointed with the oil of gladness above their fellows."—Ps. xliv. 8. Learn hence with what affections you ought to embrace, not His feet, but the whole of Christ in the Eucharist, as often as you frequent it. Lay fast hold on your beloved, and let Him not go from you, till He hath given you His blessing, as He did to Jacob.—Gen. xxxii. 26-29.

Consider 3.—"Jesus said to them: Fear not. Go tell My brethren," etc. Admire the sweetness of our Lord in comforting His servants, and taking them from all fear. Ponder these words, "My brethren," bearing a most friendly and sweet name. He who was now King of Glory, disdained not to call poor ignorant fishermen His brethren. O what a happiness it is to have such a brother! Love Him, therefore, as your brother, and put your trust in Him, for if the "brother that is helped by his brother," as the wise man saith, "is like a strong city"—Prov. xviii. 19,—how much more he who is helped by such a brother.

SATURDAY.

PETER AND JOHN GO TO THE SEPULCHRE, AND OUR LORD APPEARETH TO PETER.

Consider 1.—The devout women relate what they had seen at the sepulchre to the disciples that were assembled together, but "they did not believe them," for the apostles were as yet fixed to sensible things and were not enlightened by the Holy Ghost. So the mysteries of the cross and resurrection seem no better than mere folly to the wise men of this world. Beseech our Lord to enlighten your darkness, that you may not be so miserably blinded by the world.

Consider 2.—Peter and John, more desirous than the rest of knowing truth, ran to the sepulchre, entered in, looked thoroughly about, and found all as the women had related; but neither angels nor our Lord appeared unto them, for their further trial, as the relations of others ought to have sufficed. By John is signified faith; by Peter, charity; with both we must seek Christ, if at any time He be taken from us.

Consider 3.—On the same day afterwards Christ appeared unto Peter, who "went away wondering in himself at that which was come to pass." And, "the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." Thus our Lord comforts him. 1. That he might afterwards confirm others in the same belief. 2. Because he had already blotted out the sin of his denial, with due penance, and now deserved to receive consolation. 3. Because of all the disciples, he loved

Christ most, and therefore conceived more grief than any for His death. Learn to bear Christ company in His sufferings, that you may rejoice with Him in His resurrection. For, "according to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart, Thy comforts have given joy to my soul."—Ps. xciii. 19.

LOW SUNDAY.

HOLY COMMUNION.—*Consider Christ as the Prince of Peace.*

"I WILL hear what the Lord God will speak in me: for He will speak peace unto His people."—Ps. lxxxiv. 9. Consider 1.—What is read to-day in the gospel, how Christ appeared unto the apostles, and thrice imparted unto them His peace, saying, "Peace be to you."—John xx. 19. "For He is our peace"—Ephes. ii. 14,—as the apostle saith; "intending thoughts of peace, and not of affliction"—Jeremias;—and therefore, among other titles, He is called by Isaias, "the Prince of Peace."—Isa. ix. 6.

Consider 2.—There are three sorts of peace, which we are to procure. 1. With God. 2. With our neighbour. 3. With ourselves, "for the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh"—Gal. v. 17; and therefore David said, "There is no peace for my bones."—Ps. xxxvii. 4. "And a man's enemies are they of his own household."—Mich. vii. 6. To wit, his own unlawful appetites. This threefold peace the Prince and Author of it will bring unto you in the Eucharist, if you hinder not; for the Eucharist is properly a pacific Host between God and us; the symbol and bond of charity between us and our neighbour; and lastly, that which, as St. Cyril saith, "doth restrain the raging tyranny of our members, and doth intrench us round about with perfect peace." Whence, David said, "He that placed peace on thy borders, and filleth thee with the fat of corn."—Ps. cxlvii. 3.

Consider 3.—Christ brought peace this day to the apostles, "the doors being shut," and they assembled together within, and in prayer. Therefore shut up carefully the gates of your senses, and retire within the inward closet of your heart, and our Lord "will give peace in your coasts: you

shall sleep, and there shall be none to make you afraid."—Levit. xxvi. 6. But above all, purge yourself thoroughly from sin, for "there is no peace to the wicked, saith the Lord."—Isa. xlviii. 22.

MONDAY.

OUR LORD APPEARETH TO THE DISCIPLES GOING TO EMMAUS.—PART I.

Consider 1.—"Behold, two of them went the same day to a town," etc. They went therefore on the very day of the resurrection to a neighbouring town, or village, and while they were discoursing of our Lord's Passion, and of the reports and signs of His resurrection, Christ joined Himself with them, that you might learn how grateful unto Him are pious discourses, especially of His Passion. They knew not our Lord, because they wavered in their faith. Wherefore, if you will understand divine things, you must firmly believe; for, as Isaias saith, "If you will not believe, you shall not understand."—Isa. vii. 9. God is often with us at hand, and we take no notice of Him.

Consider 2.—How sweetly Christ did insinuate Himself to His disciples. "What are these discourses that you hold one with another?" Like a physician, He searches the wound to apply a remedy. They answered, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, Who was a Prophet, mighty in work and word before God and all the people." An honourable opinion of our Saviour. Such as ought to be all those that are employed in gaining souls, joining actions to their word and exhortation, and teaching, first by example, what they are to preach by word of mouth. "For that speech doth more easily penetrate the hearts of the auditors, which hath recommendation from the orator's life"—Greg. lib. 1, Ep. 24,—as St. Gregory saith.

Consider 3.—Those words of Christ: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and so to enter into His glory?" to wit, by His Passion. And what way will you enter, that seek your own ease, convenience, and satisfaction in all things, and cannot endure to suffer in the least. Think how little you have suffered hitherto in God's cause; and yet, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away."—Matt. xi. 12.

TUESDAY.

OUR LORD APPEARETH TO THE DISCIPLES, ETC. PART II.

Consider 1.—How Christ walketh with His disciples, and explains unto them the mysteries of His Passion. Oh! how their hearts were inflamed by the Divine fire, which was so near them. So that with good reason they might afterwards say, "Was not our heart burning within us?" etc. A sign, therefore, of Christ's presence in a soul, is fervour; if you be cold, and without fervour, Christ is not with you.

Consider 2.—How the disciples, being come to their journey's end, invite Christ to take up with them. He makes as if He had further to go, but they prevail on Him to stay. In the same manner, although He desireth nothing more than to be with us, according to that, "My delights were to be with the children of men"—Prov. viii. 31,—yet He loves to be entreated, and in a manner forced to it by earnest prayer. So Jacob compelled the angel: "I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me."—Gen. xxxii. 26. So likewise the Cananean woman, by still persevering, after the first repulse, obtained her daughter's cure.—Matt. xv. 28.

Consider 3.—"While He was at table with them, He took bread, and blessed, and brake, and gave to them, whereupon, "their eyes were opened, and they knew Him." These signal actions, and the singular effect of notifying Christ, show that it was a sacramental entertainment; as also the holy Fathers generally teach. The souls of the faithful and worthy receivers are truly enlightened by the breaking of the Eucharistical bread, their eyes opened to see, acknowledge, and love the infinite goodness of the Author. Christ having thus discovered Himself, presently disappeareth; for He would not have us entertain ourselves overlong, even in spiritual consolations, but betake ourselves to our employments; and, therefore, the disciples, "rising up the same hour, went back to Jerusalem," and related with great joy what had happened.

WEDNESDAY.

CHRIST APPEARETH TO HIS DISCIPLES GATHERED TOGETHER, ST. THOMAS BEING ABSENT.—PART I.

Consider 1.—"When it was late that same day, etc., and the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood in the midst," etc. This is the sixth appearance wherewith Christ was pleased to comfort His friends, on the very day of His resurrection; that all might "be filled with the breasts of His consolations, and flow with delights from the abundance of His glory."—Isa. lxvi. 11. But here He appeareth, 1. Late in the evening, that you should learn to expect our Lord with patience and longanimity. 2. He entered, the doors being shut, to show the subtility wherewith His body, now in glory, was endowed. Do you in like manner shut the doors of your senses. You must be "a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up"—Cant. iv. 12,—if you desire to entertain Christ. 3. He stood in the midst, as a shepherd amidst His flock, as a master among His disciples, and the sun in the middle of the world. Stand thus, O Lord, in the centre of my soul, feeling, teaching, and illuminating her.

Consider 2.—"He saith to them: Peace be to you." He wisheth them not plenty of riches, nor honours, nor the like; but peace, and this with God, within themselves, and among one another. Learn to prize and purchase this peace before all worldly wealth, and beseech our Lord, "That the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."—Phil. iv. 7.

Consider 3.—To confirm them more, He asketh whether they have anything to eat, "And they offered Him a piece of a broiled fish, and a honeycomb"—Luke xxiv. 42,—and He did eat thereof. Christ doth often ask of you something to eat. For, "the Word of God," as St. Ambrose saith, "feedeth upon the virtues of our soul."

THURSDAY.

CHRIST APPEARETH TO HIS DISCIPLES GATHERED TOGETHER, ETC.—PART II.

Consider 1.—How, after He had eaten, He ordained His disciples, as doctors, apostles, and pastors of His flock, but first repeateth, "Peace be to you," to show how necessary peace and union is among themselves, in apostolic men. "As my Father hath sent Me, I also send you." That is, with the same authority that My Father sent Me, I also send you; and as My Father sent Me into the world not to seek My ease and pleasure, but to take pains and suffer afflictions, after the same manner I send you, that you may learn hence what things apostolic men ought to be lovers of.

Consider 2.—"When He had said this, He breathed on them, and He said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Our Lord could have given it without breathing on them, but He would use this ceremony, that you might learn to reverence the like ceremonies of the holy Catholic Church, for likewise by means of them is conferred the Holy Ghost, and His grace, which is done either by virtue of the work itself, or in respect of the merits and disposition of the person that worketh. Beseech our Lord that He would, in like manner, breathe upon you, inspiring you with His Divine Spirit. Say with the spouse in the Canticles, "Come, O south wind, blow through my garden, and let the aromatical spices thereof flow"—Cant. iv. 16,—that is, all manner of virtue.

Consider 3.—"Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven," etc. Ponder the dignity and power expressed and conferred in these words; He gave not the like to the priests of the old law, nor to the angels themselves. Besides, He did not confine it to any determinate number or quality, either of sins or of priests, but would have it general for all, by the sacrament of confession, to show the riches of His bounty. Give Him thanks for so great a benefit, and so easy a remedy for your sins. For this is truly a "fountain open to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for the washing of the sinner."—Zach. xiii. 1.

FRIDAY.

CHRIST APPEARETH TO HIS DISCIPLES, WHEN ST. THOMAS WAS PRESENT.

Consider 1.—The great incredulity of St. Thomas, and how he came to fall into it. 1. He was singular and apart from the rest, when Jesus appeared. 2. He stubbornly rejected what the others alleged in testimony of the resurrection. 3. He presumptuously prescribed God the means, without which he would not believe. "Unless I see in His hand the print of the nails," etc., "I will not believe." 4. He persisted in that obstinacy eight whole days, notwithstanding the persuasions and endeavours of them all, and probably of the Blessed Virgin herself. See you be not singular; and learn how dangerous a thing it is, wilfully to be ruled by one's own judgment, and not to yield to others.

Consider 2.—Christ's love, like a good pastor seeking after His lost sheep. He returneth, therefore, He entereth again, the doors being shut; He saluteth as before, and turning to Thomas, rebukes him not, nor reprehends him, but sweetly calls him to Himself in these words, "Put in thy finger hither, and see My hands; and bring hither thy hand, and put it into My side; and be not faithless but believing." O how was his heart inflamed, when he put his hand into those burning furnaces of love! In like manner ought yours to be inflamed, as often as you receive Him in the holy Eucharist, if you were not wholly insensible, and colder than the very ice.

Consider 3.—The admirable confession of St. Thomas: "My Lord and my God!" He acknowledged Him true Man and true God: expressing His human nature in the first word, and His divine nature in the other. Ponder with yourself these titles; and seeing He is your Lord, carry yourself not as your own, but as His; and as He is also your God, see that you yield Him due worship and honour. Say with the prophet, "To Thee, O Lord, will I cry, and make supplication to my God."—Ps. xxix. 9. And, "O Lord my God, I will give praise to Thee for ever."

SATURDAY.

OF CHRIST'S WOUNDS SHOWED TO ST. THOMAS, REMAINING IN HIS GLORIOUS BODY.

Consider 1.—Our Lord out of his goodness would retain the marks of His wounds, and the very holes of the nails, for divers ends. 1. To strengthen His disciples and us in the belief of His resurrection, demonstrating thereby that it was the same body that rose, and that was before nailed to the cross. 2. In sign of His victory, and triumph over the world, according to that: "Have confidence, I have overcome the world."—John xvi. 33. 3. That they might be a perpetual memorial of His love towards us, to excite us to return our love, and to suffer for Him; whence St. Paul said, "I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body"—Gal. vi. 17;—to wit, by continually mortifying the flesh.

Consider 2.—He retained them. 4. To show what care He would have of us in heaven, according to that of Isaias, "Can a woman forget her infant?" etc. "Yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee in My hands."—Isa. xlix. 15, 16. 5. That He might present them to His Eternal Father, pleading for us as our advocate; whence it is that David said, "Behold, O God, our protector; and look on the face of Thy Christ."—Ps. lxxxiii. 10.

Consider 3.—He kept them, that they might be as so many fountains, and rivers of His grace, and favours, like to those fountains which watered all Paradise. Whence the prophet said, "You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains."—Isa. xii. 3. 6. That they might be an universal refuge in all our afflictions, according to that, "the rock a refuge for the irchins"—Ps. ciii. 18,—that is, sinners. For "the rock (as the apostle saith) was Christ."—1 Cor. x. 4. As often, therefore, as you are afflicted, betake yourselves to these wounds. "Enter thou into the rock (with Isaias), and hide thee in the pit, from the face of the fear of the Lord."—Isa. ii. 10. Abide with the Spouse in the Canticles, "in the clifts of the rock, in the hollow places of the wall."—Cant. ii. 14.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as a good Pastor.

"THE Lord ruleth me; and I shall want nothing. He hath set me in a place of pasture."—Ps. xxii. 2. Consider 1.—What Christ saith to-day in the gospel: "I am the good Shepherd."—John x. 11. Ponder how well this title agreeth with Him. A good pastor was Jacob, who said of himself, "Day and night was I parched with heat, and with frost, and sleep departed from my eyes."—Gen. xxxi. 40. But much better was Christ, who after thirty-three years' heats and colds, lastly laid down His life for His sheep, and Himself became "as a sheep led to the slaughter."—Isa. liii. 7. But what shepherd ever fed his sheep with his own blood? as Christ did, to raise and make them fit for heaven; He gave them His body and blood for meat and drink. Who would not wish to be fed by such a Pastor?

Consider 2.—This Pastor will come to you to-day in the holy Eucharist, to take care of you, to feed, to cherish, and to defend you from the infernal wolves. For there is no part of a shepherd's office which He doth not most willingly perform. Therefore He saith by the prophet, "Behold, I Myself will seek My sheep, and will visit them. As the shepherd visiteth his flock," etc.; "I will feed them in the most fruitful pastures; I will seek that which was lost; and that which was driven away, I will bring back again; and I will bind up that which was broken; and I will strengthen that which was weak, and that which was fat and strong I will preserve: and I will feed them in judgment."—Ezech. xxxiv. 11, etc. Ponder each particular.

Consider 3.—Seeing you are a sheep endowed with reason, you must be careful that nothing be in you that may be ungrateful to the eyes of this your Pastor; wherefore wash yourself from the filth of sin, that you may appear in His sight with a pure and clean fleece. Besides, "My sheep (saith He) hear My voice."—John x. 27. Hear, therefore, and obey Him diligently, that you may deserve to remain for ever in His fold.

MONDAY.

OUR LORD APPEARETH TO THE SEVEN DISCIPLES WHO WERE FISHING.—PART I.

Consider 1.—"There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas, and Nathanael," etc.—John xxi. 2. Peter inviting them to fishing, they all show a readiness to accompany him: "We also come with thee;" teaching us thereby what union and concord ought to be among evangelic labourers in fishing for souls. They go fishing, both to relieve their poverty and want, and to avoid idleness; that you might learn to esteem the one and shun the other.

Consider 2.—How that night they took nothing. So all human industry whatsoever, of itself is in vain, without the Divine concurrence. "Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it."—Ps. cxxvi. 1. This hath place chiefly in the gaining of souls, that you should learn not to trust to your own abilities, but to place all your hopes of success in the Divine assistance. "Neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."—1 Cor. iii. 7. Observe likewise that in the night of sin nothing is to be taken, in order to eternal life; but all our labour, though otherwise ever so good, during that state (as to merit) is wholly lost.

Consider 3.—How, "when the morning was come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples knew not that it was Jesus." So He often is at hand in our necessities, though we mind Him not. Then He asketh whether they have any meat, though He knew they had not; because He will have us acknowledge our wants, before He bestoweth His gifts. Lastly, He biddeth them "cast the net on the right side of the ship;" and having obeyed, "now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes," in reward of their obedience; that you might learn also to follow and obey the counsels of your superiors. For "an obedient man," saith Solomon, "shall speak of victory."—Prov. xxi. 28.

TUESDAY.

OUR LORD APPEARETH TO THE SEVEN DISCIPLES WHO WERE FISHING.—PART II.

Consider 1.—John knowing it to be Christ, by the miraculous draught of fish, undoubtedly pronounceth, "It is the Lord." And Peter presently in all haste flingeth himself into the sea, to swim unto Him. In John is expressed the light of the contemplative life, which is quick-sighted to know our Lord, and to point Him out to others. In Peter is figured the fervour of the active life, which is always forward upon works of piety. Give yourself to both, that by contemplation you may come to know the divine will, and by action you may effectually put it in practice.

Consider 2.—Our good Lord had prepared a dinner for them, probably by the hands of angels, when they were come on shore; for "as soon as they came to land, they saw hot coals lying, and a fish laid thereon, and bread."—John xxi. 9. Observe how lovingly He invites them, saying, "Come and dine," etc. And Himself distributes the bread among them. In like manner He invites us all to partake of His fulness: "Come to Me, all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you."—Matt. xi. 28. Wonderful is the care and providence of God over His servants, that you may learn to "cast thy care upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee."—Ps. liv. 23.

Consider 3.—If it be your calling to fish for souls, you must be sure to cast your net on the right side, by a right and pure intention, only seeking the glory of God and gain of souls; not on the left, seeking your own temporal profit. "The apostles (saith St. Bernard) did spread their nets to catch fish, not gold, nor silver."

WEDNESDAY.

OUR LORD COMMITS HIS SHEEP TO PETER.

Consider 1.—How presently after they were refreshed, Christ, intending to make Peter His Vicar, and to commit unto him the care of His flock, questions him first about his love towards Him, and that thrice, one after another,

saying, "Simon, son of John, lovest thou Me more than these?"—John xxi. 15,—to teach us how well grounded he must be in Christ's love, whosoever undertaketh the government of souls, for the undergoing with courage and resolution the labours which accompany that charge. Examine yourself whether you have a sufficient stock of love to discharge your duty in this point, according to your calling.

Consider 2.—What Christ said: "Feed My sheep." Ponder what it is to "feed," and how it is to be done. For it is the same as to further them towards their eternal life, by preaching the word of God, by the administration of sacraments, and by the example of a good life. Let such of this calling take heed they be not of the number of those whom our Lord speaks of by His prophet: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel," etc. "You eat the milk, and you clothed yourselves with the wool: and you killed that which was fat; but my flock you did not feed."—Ezech. xxxiv. 2, 3.

Consider 3.—Our Lord foretold Peter his death, and manner thereof, which he was to suffer for His sake, as a certain pledge of their mutual love, that you might learn to esteem such sufferings, and death itself as pledges of God's love and special favour towards you, as truly they are: therefore, the prophet said: "Who are weaned from the milk, expect tribulation upon tribulation, hope upon hope," etc.—Isa. xxviii. 9. That is, you, who are come to man's estate in virtue and perfection, expect tribulation upon tribulation; that you may deserve for your reward, hope upon hope.

THURSDAY.

OUR LORD APPEARETH TO THE DISCIPLES ON THE MOUNT.

Consider 1.—The unspeakable goodness of our Lord, who, that He might comfort His friends to the full, appointed them to repair to a mountain of Galilee, where they might all see Him at once. For probably this was that famous appearance which St. Paul mentioneth: "Then He was seen by more than five hundred brethren at once."—1 Cor. xv. 6. Think with what fervour they all went to see our Lord.

Consider 2.—How our Lord appearing unto them, comforted and confirmed them in their faith, and among other things, said unto them, "All power is given to Me in heaven and in earth." He had the same power from all eternity as God, but received it now, due to Him as man, in reward of His merits and sufferings. Rejoice that so great a power is reposed in Him, who loves you so entirely. How well may you assure yourself of His protection, and say with the prophet, "If armies in camp should stand together against me, my heart shall not fear. If a battle should rise up against me, in this will I be confident," etc.—Ps. xxvi. 3.

Consider 3.—It followeth: "Going therefore teach all nations, baptizing them," etc., where He instituted the sacrament of baptism in place of circumcision. And as that was the door or entrance, in the ancient law, so is baptism in the new, but with far greater advantages of grace, etc. Observe likewise that baptism, or faith alone sufficeth not to salvation, and that there is also required the observance of all the commandments: "Teaching them to observe all things," etc. For, "Whosoever offendeth in one point, is become guilty of all."—James ii. 10. "Therefore (David said) was I directed to all Thy commandments; I have hated all wicked ways."—Ps. cxviii. 128. Do you the like.

FRIDAY.

OTHER APPEARANCES WITHIN THE FORTY DAYS.

Consider 1.—How our Lord, as St. Luke saith, "showed Himself alive after His passion, by many proofs, for forty days appearing," etc.—Acts i. 3. So long would our blessed Lord remain with them, to confirm them the more in the belief of His resurrection. And during that time, although He was ever present with them after an invisible manner, yet visibly He appeared only at times, that so, like a tender mother, He might use them by degrees to more solid though harder fare, to wit, the want of His corporal presence.

Consider 2.—How in these interviews, saith St. Luke, "He spake of the kingdom of God." Not of vanities, or curiosities, or of things delightful to sense, nor of news, nor of other worldly trifles, but of purchasing the kingdom of God, and that by sufferings and tribulations, by mortifica-

tions of ourselves and violence; according to the evangelist: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away."—Matt. xi. 12. Learn hence, to treat willingly of heavenly things. Moreover, it is likely our Lord in that time did teach the apostles those things, which they afterwards delivered to the Church by tradition. Beseech our Lord that He would deign to converse with you in the secret closet of your heart, and there instruct you in His law. Say with the prophet, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord: teach me Thy justifications."—Ps. cxviii. 12.

Consider 3.—And reflect seriously upon yourself, how often God hath spoken within your heart concerning the kingdom of God, moving you both to the desire and purchase thereof by works of perfection, of charity, of humility, of temperance, and the like, and you have not heard His voice. Listen, therefore, to Him, in future, lest perhaps, He bring upon you those plagues of which Moses speaks: "The Lord shall increase thy plagues;" "Plagues great and lasting, infirmities grievous and perpetual," etc. "Because thou heardest not the voice of the Lord thy God."—Deut. xxviii. 59, 62.

SATURDAY.

DIVERS CIRCUMSTANCES OF CHRIST'S APPEARANCES.

Consider 1.—Divers circumstances of these manifestations, which were made after the resurrection, for that almost the like daily happen in the interior visitation of the soul. 1. These appearances were not of continuance, but short and sudden, and more or less frequent, according to the disposition and fervour of desire in the parties. The same order our Lord observeth with a devout soul, communicating Himself unto her, not always or without intermission, but at times and intervals only. Inflame yourself with His love, that you may the oftener enjoy Him, and be able to say with the spouse, "If you find my beloved, tell Him that I languish with love."—Cant. v. 8.

Consider 2.—He appeared for the most part unexpectedly, and as suddenly withdrew Himself, and commonly made but a short stay, whereby He nourished in them a desire of Himself. In the same manner He visits the faithful soul. Whence saith St. Bernard, "There may in this life be joy

and content in the spouse's presence, but not satiety." Therefore do not expect to have your fill here, but let it suffice you to have a taste only of the joys of His Divine presence. You "shall be satisfied," with David, "when His glory shall appear."—Ps. xvi. 15.

Consider 3.—The time and place were different. So it is in the interior visits of the soul, which happen sometimes in prayer, sometimes in reading, at other times in the midst of business and affairs. For "the Spirit breatheth where He will."—John iii. 8. Lastly, sometimes He appeared in disguise, as He did to Mary Magdalen, and the two disciples going to Emmaus; sometimes in His own shape and figure; at other times again, He made Himself known only by angels. In the same manner He manifesteth Himself to us now immediately by Himself, and that apparently, now again by our superiors, preachers, etc. Beseech Him to open your eyes, that you may know Him, in what manner soever He shall please to show Himself to you. Say with the spouse, "Show me where Thou feedest, where Thou liest in the mid-day."—Cant. i. 6.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the Comforter of your Soul.

"THE Lord will comfort Sion, and will comfort all the ruins thereof; and He will make her desert as a place of pleasure."—Isa. ii. 3.—Consider 1.—What is read in this day's gospel: "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you."—John xvi. 22. Think how "many are the afflictions of the just"—Ps. xxxiii. 20—in this life, from within and without. That all the delights of this world are but vain and empty, and that there is no solid comfort or joy to be taken in anything but in God alone, who, therefore, by St. Paul, is said to be the "God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation."—2 Cor. i. 3, 4.

Consider 2.—Christ in the Eucharist is properly the com-

forter of the afflicted. Therefore David saith, "Thou hast prepared a table before me, against them that afflict me." And, "My chalice which inebriateth me, how goodly is it!"—Ps. xxii. 5. For the holy Eucharist is a torrent of pleasure, a river flowing with sweetness, an ocean of spiritual delights, delighting the mind with unspeakable sweetness, according to the words of the psalmist: "Thou hast visited the earth, and hast plentifully watered it; Thou hast many ways enriched it."—Ps. lxiv. 10. If it does not comfort nor enrich you, it is a sign you are not sufficiently disposed.

Consider 3.—The necessary disposition to enjoy this sweetness, and these spiritual comforts is, 1. A perfect grief for your sins. For, "according to the multitude of my sorrows in my heart (saith David), Thy comforts have given joy to my soul."—Ps. xciii. 19. 2. An aversion and loathing of the world, with a hunger and longing desire after heavenly things. Therefore, our Lord saith by Jeremias, "I have inebriated the weary soul; and I have filled every hungry soul."—Jer. xxxi. 25. Come, therefore, confidently with these, "that you may suck and be filled with the breasts of His consolations."—Isa. lxvi. 11.

MONDAY.

THE BENEFIT OF CREATION.—PART I.

Consider 1.—What you were before God created you: as to your soul, you were quite nothing; as to your body, little better: for that which you have from your parents, how easily might God have hindered, and turned it into some other substance. Therefore, out of His mere goodness, without any merit of yours, among innumerable other creatures, which He could have produced instead of you, He decreed to take you out of the abyss of your nothing, and to bestow upon you the form, or being, not of a stone, or tree, or of some brute beast, but of man: "Behold (saith our Lord) as the clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in My hand."—Jer. xviii. 6.

Consider 2.—The excellency of your soul, which God hath placed in your body. 1. It is a spirit, like unto angels and God Himself; that you should learn to regard only spiritual things, and not pursue so wretchedly as you do

after sensual pleasures and riches. 2. It is immortal, and cannot be destroyed by any created power; see, therefore, that, as you are immortal by nature, you be likewise so by grace; for the death of the soul is sin.

Consider 3.—The noble powers wherewith God hath endowed your soul; chiefly the memory, will, and understanding; also the prerogative of free will, whereby you are lord and master of your own actions; likewise a capability of wisdom, grace, and the like. Think what you may return to your Creator for all these benefits; at least, return Him these same again without blemish, and take heed that you come not to suffer that reproach: "Thou hast forsaken the God that begot thee, and hast forgotten the Lord that created thee."—Deut. xxxii. 18.

TUESDAY.

THE BENEFIT OF CREATION.—PART II.

Consider 1.—The many benefits that are discovered in the composition of your body. "Thy hands have made me (saith Job), and fashioned me wholly round about," etc. "Hast thou not milked me as milk, and curdled me like cheese?" etc.—Job x. 8, 10. See with what variety of members, senses, and necessary instruments and conveniencies for the exercise of its several functions, God hath furnished you; how admirably and fitly He hath disposed all things in their due place and order, so that in the whole fabric nothing can be found either superfluous, or wanting, or disordered. Hence, David with reason crieth out: "Thy knowledge is become wonderful to me"—Ps cxxxviii. 6,—that is, as St. Basil expoundeth, out of the structure of my body, "it is made great, and I cannot reach to it."

Consider 2.—How every member of your body is a particular benefit of God. Think how it would be with you if you should want your eyes, your tongue, your hand, or any other member; how much would you esteem yourself bound to Him that should restore any single one of these that had been lost? How much more grateful, then, ought you be to God, who hath bestowed them all upon you, whole and entire? See, therefore, you do not abuse these same benefits to the displeasure and dishonour of your

Creator, "by yielding your members to serve uncleanness and iniquity, unto iniquity," rather than "to serve justice (as the apostle admonisheth) unto sanctification."—Rom. vi. 19.

Consider 3.—How just a thing it is, that He who hath created your whole being, should likewise wholly and entirely possess you; for, as the apostle saith, "who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof?"—1 Cor. ix. 7. God hath planted you as a choice vine in His vineyard; yield Him, therefore, the fruits thereof, fruits of piety, charity, patience, and other like virtues. "All that you have (saith St. Bernard) you owe it to Him of whom you have it."

WEDNESDAY.

THE BENEFIT OF PRESERVATION.—PART I.

Consider 1.—The greatness of this benefit. By creation alone, God gave you yourself but once: by preservation He doth the same every moment of your life; for, unless He did preserve you, you would immediately return to your own nothing. The noon-beams have not so strict a dependence on the sun, as you have on God. If, therefore, one that should hang by a small thread held in another's hand, ready to fall from a high tower into a deep pit, if the thread should be let go, would not dare to revile or injure him that held the thread—how dare you, that depend immediately on the hand of God, provoke Him by sin to let go the thread of His concurrence and your life?

Consider 2.—As you cannot live without God, so neither can you, though living, exercise any action of life without His special concurrence, not so much as to move a hand, or open your eyes, or utter a word, or do the least thing; for, as St. Paul saith, "In Him we live, and move, and be."—Acts xvii. 28. Whence St. Augustine says: "You oblige me to you, Lord, every moment, while every moment you afford me your large benefits."

Consider 3.—God doth not barely preserve your life, but withal, defends it from innumerable evils and miseries which others suffer; so that others' miseries are your benefits. Think with yourself why you are not, as many others are,

blind, deaf, dumb, lame, and oppressed with a thousand diseases and infirmities; why not slain by the sword, consumed by fire or water, or dashed in pieces by some ruin, or the like. God hath delivered you from all these misfortunes, that, being so highly obliged to Him for His benefits, you might serve Him in holiness and justice before Him, all the days of your life.—Luke i. 74, 75.

THURSDAY.

THE BENEFIT OF PRESERVATION.—PART II.

Consider 1.—Almighty God, for your better preservation, hath not only removed evils from you, as we have seen, but also, as a most indulgent Father, hath abundantly provided you both with necessaries, and all useful conveniencies. He hath furnished this lower world for you, as a house to dwell in, and hath adorned it with the sun, moon, and stars for your benefit and delight, and hath stored it with all manner of living creatures for your use. In fine, whatsoever flourisheth in gardens, walketh in the fields, swimmeth in the waters, flieth in the air, or shineth in the heavens, is all for you. "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" etc. "Thou hast subjected all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen: moreover, the beasts also of the fields, the birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea, that pass through the paths of the sea."—Ps. viii. 5, 8.

Consider 2.—How God, not content to have provided all these creatures for your use, vouchsafeth also jointly to concur with them; for, seeing He had necessary influence on all their actions—with the fire He doth truly warm you, with the sun He illuminates you, with the air He refresheth you, with meat and drink He feeds you, with the flowers He delights you: and so for the rest. Wherefore, say with St. Augustine: "As there is not any hour, Lord, or moment all my life, wherein I do not enjoy Your benefits, so ought there not to be any moment wherein I have You not before my eyes by remembrance, and love You not with my whole strength.

Consider 3.—Other benefits of God appertaining particularly to the mind: such as good education, care of parents and superiors, counsel and example of the virtuous, the

endowments of knowledge, arts and sciences, together with the conveniencies of this life, and that, perhaps, with little care or labour of your own, which many others cannot get without hard labour, and hazard oftentimes of soul. Think, therefore, what you shall "render to the Lord, for all the things that He hath rendered to you."—Ps. cxv. 3. He desires nothing but yourself: "My son (saith He), give Me thy heart."—Prov. xxiii. 26.

FRIDAY.

THE BENEFIT OF REDEMPTION.—PART I.

Consider 1.—That you may the better understand the greatness of this benefit, ponder what a misery it is to live in slavery, under some cruel tyrant, where you are to endure perpetual imprisonment, hunger and thirst, stripes, and other torments. Think what the children of Israel suffered in the bondage of Egypt and captivity of Babylon, and what you were likely to suffer if you were condemned perpetually to the galley under the Turk, and what you would give for your ransom.

Consider 2.—The slavery of sin is incomparably greater than all this, which makes us slaves of the devil, as the apostle speaketh—2 Tim. ii. 26,—and liable to the torments of hell. We were all under this slavery; nor was there any possible human means of escaping; when behold! the only begotten Son of God came down from heaven, and took upon Him to satisfy for our sins, that so He might deliver us from so cursed a servitude: "Who gave Himself (saith the apostle) for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity."—Tit. ii. 14.

Consider 3.—The cause of so great a mercy: Christ did it not for any profit of His, as if He had need of us: "Thou art my God (saith David), for Thou hast no need of my goods."—Ps. xv. 2. Nor for any deserts of ours, which then neither were nor could be any; but out of His own mere goodness and mercy, according to the prophet Isaias: "In His love, and in His mercy, He redeemed them, and bare them, and He carried them and lifted them up all the days of old."—Isa. lxiii. 9. Who would not love so loving

a Lord, and give himself up wholly to Him, without whom he had been lost for ever?

SATURDAY.

THE BENEFIT OF REDEMPTION.—PART II.

Consider 1.—The manner wherewith Christ redeemed you from the said slavery. With good reason David said, "With Him is plentiful redemption"—Ps. cxxix. 7;—for He could, by His absolute power, have remitted all our sin, without taking man's flesh upon Him. He might also have satisfied the rigour of justice by the least act of His, after His Incarnation; but would suffer so much, that "where sin abounded, grace might more abound"—Rom. v. 20;—and that he might leave us an example, according to St. Peter, "that we should follow His steps."—1 Pet. ii. 21.

Consider 2.—More in particular what He suffered. In the manger, in His circumcision, in His flight, and in Egypt itself; by hunger and thirst, by cold and nakedness, by much travelling and frequent dangers. Lastly, during the time of His passion, by His scourging at the pillar, by the crowning with thorns, and nailing on the cross; and all this He suffered for His enemies, that is, for all sinners. Who has suffered so much even for His friends? Wherefore the Church, on Easter-eve, breaketh forth into those admirable words, "O happy fault, which deserveth to have such and so great a Redeemer."

Consider 3.—What you ought to do in return, and what to offer to such a Redeemer. Ask yourself that question, with St. Bernard, "If I owe my whole self for being made, what more shall I add for being repaired, and repaired in such manner; for I was not so easily repaired as first made." Wherefore, behave yourself as a bond-slave of Christ, as truly you are; thank Him for so great a favour, and give yourself wholly to His service. Reflect often upon that saying of the apostle, "You are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body."—1 Cor vi. 10.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the Advocate of your Soul.

"BEHOLD, the Lord God is my helper; who is he that shall condemn me?"—Isa. l. 9. Consider 1.—What is read to-day in the gospel: "I go to Him that sent Me," etc. And, "it is expedient to you that I go."—John xvi. 5, 7. For our Lord went to His Eternal Father to plead for us, and that He might be in that supreme consistory of heaven, our Patron, Advocate, Mediator, or Intercessor, according to the words of St. John, "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Just."—1 John ii. 1. And that of St. Paul, "There is one Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus."—1 Tim. ii. 5. Therefore, it was truly expedient for us, that He should go to His Father to intercede in our behalf, being guilty of many crimes.

Consider 2.—What a benefit it were to have for advocate, in the court of some worldly prince, the king's only son, ready upon all occasions to defend you with his father, and to further and promote you what he could. Such a one is Christ, our most loving Lord, "who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood"—Apoc. i. 5;—most willing to help us, "who wills all men to be saved."—1 Tim. ii. 4. And lastly, most powerful to obtain what thing soever of His Father: "All things are delivered to Me by My Father."—Luke x. 22.

Consider 3.—How much you are to wish for that hour, wherein your advocate is to come into your soul, in the holy Eucharist, for then you may confidently open unto Him all your miseries and necessities, that He may plead to His Father for efficacious redress. See, therefore, that the lodging of your heart be clean, for He is wonderfully delighted with purity, as the wise man saith: "Wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins."—Wisd. i. 4.

MONDAY.

THE BENEFIT OF ADOPTION.—PART I.

Consider 1.—That of St. John, "Behold what manner of charity the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, and should be the sons of God."—1 John iii. 1. The Father of Mercies was not satisfied with redeeming us, but would also adopt us to be His children. The benefit is the greater, in regard of the meanness of the person, and the excellence of the dignity to which He is raised. For what more vile or base than man; what more excellent than God. Man, as to his body, is no better than dust, a sack of dung, and food for worms. As to his soul, he is the very sink of sin, and abyss of ignorance, and mirror of inconstancy. Think how slender in his ability, how little it is he knoweth, what miseries he is subject unto. So that Job saith with reason, "What is a man, that Thou shouldst magnify him? or why dost Thou set Thy heart upon him."—Job vii. 17.

Consider 2.—On the other side, what God is, and how great is His majesty, glory, riches, beauty, power, etc., and what a dignity it is to be His adopted son. If it was esteemed a great and wonderful thing in Joseph the Patriarch, to be taken out of prison and made lord of Egypt—Gen. xli. 40;—in Saul, from following of asses, to be anointed king; and in David, "from following the ewes great with young," to be promoted to a kingdom—1 Kings ix.; Ps. lxxviii. 70;—how much more is it to be admired, that a lump of earth should be raised to the dignity of being the son of God, and that the food of worms should become the companion of angels.

Consider 3.—How much you owe to God for having so highly exalted you, "Raising up the needy from the earth, and lifting up the poor out of the dunghill: that He may place him with the princes"—Ps. cxii. 7, 8—of His Heavenly court. O unspeakable honour! you deserve not the name of God's servant, and you are made His son. "Acknowledge, therefore, O Christian," saith St. Leo, "your dignity; and being made partaker of the divine nature, do not, by unworthy behaviour, degenerate to your former baseness."

TUESDAY.

THE BENEFIT OF ADOPTION.—PART II.

Consider 1.—The admirable effects of this benefit. 1. It puts us under God's especial providence and protection, so as to bring us up, govern, maintain, and defend us, as a loving father doth his children. Whence David said, "As a father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear Him," etc.—Ps. cii. 13. And by Isaias, He promiseth yet more: "Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? and if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee."—Isa. xlix. 15. O what a security it is to be protected by such a Father. If God stand for us, who will be against us?

Consider 2.—How by this adoption, we are "made partakers of the divine nature"—1 Pet. i. 4,—and in a manner gods, according to the words of the psalmist, "I said: You are gods, and all of you the sons of the Most High."—Ps. lxxxi. 6. For it makes us partakers in some degree of God's perfections and excellencies, as of His wisdom, fortitude, constancy, justice, charity, and other attributes, which in Him are by nature, and are communicated to us as His children, by grace. Learn, therefore, greatly to esteem such a benefit, that makes you like to God Himself.

Consider 3.—How it makes us also heirs of the kingdom of heaven, according to the words of the apostle: "And if sons, heirs also: heirs indeed of God, and joint heirs with Christ."—Rom. viii. 17. O what a happiness! Look, therefore, upon heaven as your own by inheritance. Say with that philosopher, "I am born to greater things than to make myself a slave to my own flesh." Direct your thoughts and cares thither, where you are sure to inherit endless treasures; contemn all mortal things, and give your mind solely to such as are truly great and everlasting; and, as a certain holy man was wont to say, "Do not degenerate from the high thoughts of the sons of God."

WEDNESDAY.

THE BENEFIT OF ADOPTION.—PART III.

Consider the several obligations we have by reason of this benefit. The first is, of loving tenderly, and with our whole heart, so loving a Father. For, if children of this world do naturally love their parents, of whom they only receive their corporal substance and earthly goods, how much more are you bound to love God, from whom all proceeds that is good, and who "hath possessed thee, and made thee, and created thee."—Deut. xxxii. 6.

The second obligation is of honouring Him as our Father; that is, reverencing Him with exterior worship, and serving Him with all respect and duty. "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thou mayest be long-lived upon the land."—Exod. xx. 12. And our Lord Himself, by Malachias, saith, "If I be a Father, where is My honour?"—Mal. i. 6.

The third obligation is of imitating God, as children do their parents. Therefore Christ said, "Be you perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect."—Matt. v. 48. And St. Paul, "Be ye followers of God, as most dear children"—Ephes. v. 1. You must, therefore, imitate His sanctity and immunity from sin, His charity, mercy, justice, and other virtues. "You shall be holy," saith our Lord, "because I am holy."—Lev. xi. 46.

The fourth obligation is of fearing ever to offend our Father, according to Leviticus: "Let every one fear his father and his mother."—Lev. xix. 3. And if children of this world fear to offend their parents, that they may not be disinherited by them, how much more ought we to fear God. Take heed that it be not ever objected to you: "I have brought up children, and exalted them: but they have despised Me."—Isa. i. 2. You will despise Him, if you prefer you own will and desires before His counsels and commands.

THURSDAY.

THE BENEFIT OF THE HOLY SACRAMENTS.

Consider 1.—The wonderful care your heavenly Father hath for you; for, to preserve you in the grace of His adoption, He hath provided you with many means, for which you owe thanks and gratitude. The chief of them are the seven sacraments, which, as so many fountains, He would have to flow with several gifts of grace, in all abundance, according to the diversity of our necessities, so as to make good the words of the prophet: "You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains."—Isa. xii. 3.

Consider 2.—The infinite wisdom of God, in most fitly ordaining each sacrament; for, that man might be born into a spiritual life, He instituted baptism. To grow up and be strengthened in the same, confirmation. To be nourished, holy Eucharist. That he might have a remedy and certain cure against his spiritual diseases, penance. That he might be armed for his last combat, extreme unction. Lastly, for the right discharging of several states and duties in His Church, He instituted holy orders and matrimony. Truly "blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O Lord"—Ps. lxxxiii. 5,—who dost so abundantly provide for them that fear Thee.

Consider 3.—These fountains of grace, 1. Are open to all; none are excluded, though ever so poor. Whence the prophet crieth out: "All you that thirst, come to the waters; and you that have no money, make haste, buy and eat."—Isa. lv. 1. 2. They are ever flowing, without cessation, like that woman's oil, which never failed to run—4 Kings iv.,—so long as there were any empty vessels. 3. They do infallibly work their effect, by force of that virtue which they receive by the divine institution, unless we put an impediment. 4. They are placed in obvious things, and easy to be had, for our more certain use and benefit. Be thankful to God for so great a liberality, and endeavour to come ever worthily unto them.

FRIDAY.

THE BENEFIT OF THE GUARDIANSHIP OF ANGELS.

Consider 1.—What David said: "He hath given His angels charge over thee; to keep thee in all thy ways."—Ps. xc. 11. Our heavenly Father, not content to make us His sons, would also provide us, as princes do their children, with tutors and guardians. This charge He committed to the angels themselves, who should illuminate, govern and protect us; for they are "all ministering spirits (saith the apostle), sent to minister for them, who shall receive the inheritance of salvation."—Heb. i. 14.

Consider 2.—To whom, and of whom He hath committed this charge. To the angels, who are most noble creatures, pure spirits, immortal by nature; "full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty"—Ezech. xxviii. 12;—more powerful and strong than whole armies of men, adorned with all manner of grace and glory, and ever enjoying the vision of God. To these then He hath committed thee, who are but a worm of the earth, and no better than dirt and ashes, that "they shall bear thee up; lest thou dash thy foot against a stone."—Ps. xc. 12. O what care and protection is this of the angels! What a favour!

Consider 3.—How this care of theirs ought to excite in us, as St. Bernard admonisheth, "reverence, devotion and confidence in them;" reverence, in regard of their presence; devotion, for their benevolence; confidence, in their sure custody. "If I should give myself to be thy servant" (said young Tobias to the Angel Raphael, his guardian), "I should not make a worthy return for thy care."—Tob. ix. 2. Reverence, therefore, your angel-guardian with affection, and do not presume, in his sight, who is always present, to do that which you would be ashamed of before man. "Take notice of him, and hear his voice," etc., saith our Lord, and "I will be an enemy to thy enemies, and will afflict them that afflict thee: and My angel shall go before thee."—Exod. xxiii. 21-23.

SATURDAY.

THE BENEFIT OF THE PATRONAGE OF THE SAINTS, AND CHIEFLY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Consider 1.—Our heavenly Father hath not only provided us with guardians, but also patrons and advocates; to wit, the blessed that reign with Him in heaven; to the end, that as He is our judge, we might have those that would continually intercede for us, and move Him to mercy. "Go (saith our Lord) to My servant Job, and offer for yourselves a holocaust: and My servant Job shall pray for you: his face I will accept, that folly be not imputed to you." —Job xlii. 8.

Consider 2.—With what care and love the saints in heaven perform this office, and with what benefit to us, obtaining for us all manner of good, as is evident by infinite miracles and revelations. Of holy Jeremias it is said in the second book of Machabees, "This is a lover of His brethren, and of the people of Israel: this is he that prayeth much for the people, and for all the holy city."—2 Machab. xv. 14. What confidence, therefore, may we justly put in the protection of such powerful advocates? If it be a thing of great account to have a powerful friend in some worldly prince's court, how much more to have one in the court of heaven?

Consider 3.—How diligent you ought to be in the honour and invocation of the saints, especially those of your name, and your patrons, that they may obtain of our Lord what you stand in need of. But above all, you must procure to be fervent in devotion and reverence to the Blessed Virgin, who being "mother of all the living," as the Fathers call her, she exceeds all others, both in love to us, and in power with her Son. Give God thanks, therefore, for so powerful an advocate, and recommend yourself with all earnestness unto her; for "she denieth help to none that doth duly ask it, and intercedes not for any in vain to her Son."

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as a liberal Bestower of Gifts.

"INCLINE Thy ear, O Lord, and hear me: for I am needy and poor."—Ps. lxxxv. 1. Consider 1.—What is read this day in the gospel: "Hitherto you have not asked anything in My name. Ask, and you shall receive," etc.—John xvi. 24. Imagine yourself, on the one side, as a poor naked beggar, and wanting many things necessary for the maintenance of your spiritual life; and Christ our Lord, on the other, infinitely rich, infinitely liberal, and desirous that all should partake of His plenty; hear His solemn proffer: "Ask, and you shall receive." Never did any prince make so liberal a promise. He longeth, in a manner, to bestow His gifts: "Come over to Me, all ye that desire Me, and be filled with My fruits."—Ecclus. xxiv. 26. He is more ready to give, than we to receive.

Consider 2.—This bountiful Lord will come this day unto you in the Eucharist; and if you be gracious in His sight, will say unto you, as Assuerus did to Esther, "What is thy petition, Esther, that it may be granted thee? and what wilt thou have done? although thou ask the half of my kingdom, thou shalt have it."—Esther vii. 2. See, therefore, what you most stand in need of, and have your petition ready, and adorn yourself as Esther did, that you may gain His good will to you when He comes.

Consider 3.—The impediments which will render your prayers of no effect, to the end you may take them away: 1. "God doth not hear sinners"—John ix. 31,—that is, as long as they persist in sin without repentance. 2. Neither doth He hear those that ask vain and unprofitable things, but sends them away with that check and rebuke, "You know not what you ask."—Matt. xx. 22. 3. Nor yet those that pray tepidly and coldly: "But because thou art lukewarm," etc., "I will begin to vomit thee out of my mouth."—Apoc. iii. 16. 4. And, lastly, He requireth constancy and perseverance in asking; so to him that persevereth knocking were given loaves, even for "his importunity, as many as he needed."—Luke xi. 8.

MONDAY.

THE BENEFIT OF PRAYER.—PART I.

Consider 1.—The benefit of prayer, which the Church recommendeth particularly unto us these Rogation days. Consider, therefore, first, the dignity and excellency of prayer. 1. It is an act of religion, and divine worship, offered to God, and accepted by Him as incense and sacrifice; according to that, "Let my prayer be directed as incense in Thy sight; the lifting up of my hands, as evening sacrifice."—Ps. cxl. 2. 2. By prayer man becometh companion of the angels, and converseth familiarly with God Himself. 3. God takes Himself to be honoured by our prayers, as He expressly tells us by His prophet: "Call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me."—Ps. xlix. 15.

Consider 2.—The necessity we have of prayer, in regard of the miseries of this mortal life, and continual dangers. 1. Of soul, from the assaults of the devil, who, "as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour"—1 Pet. v. 8;—from the allurements of the world, and from the rebellion of our own flesh. 2. Of body, from war, famine, and pestilence; from poverty, sickness, loss of goods and fortunes, death of friends, and from innumerable other crosses and afflictions: all which make us cry out with king Josephat to our Lord: "But as we know not what to do, we can only turn our eyes to Thee."—2 Paral. xx. 12.

Consider 3.—The goodness of God, who, whereas He could sufficiently redress all our necessities, with the general providence wherewith He provideth for His other creatures; yet, to endear us the more to Himself, He requireth that we have recourse unto Him by prayer, acknowledging Him the Author of all good, and depending wholly on Him on all occasions; and, therefore, He hath given us an express command thereof, delivered by Christ in these words: "We ought always to pray."—Luke xviii. 1. Reflect upon your own particular necessities, spiritual and temporal, and "go with confidence to the Throne of Grace; that you may obtain mercy, and find grace in seasonable aid."—Heb. iv. 16.

TUESDAY.

THE BENEFIT OF PRAYER.—PART II.

Consider 1.—More in particular the benefits and efficacy of prayer, which, as Jerome saith, "overcometh the invincible, and blindeth the Almighty," moving Him to mercy, and tying His hands from punishing our sins. "Let Me alone (said God to Moses, when he was praying for the people) that My wrath may be kindled against them."—Exod. xxxii. 10. It is a general remedy against all difficulties and temptations; and "a scourge (as St. Prosper saith) to devils." Moses, lifting up his hands in prayer, obtained victory over the Amalekites—Exod. xvii. 11;—Josue, by prayer, made the sun and moon stand still, "the Lord obeying the voice of a man."—Jos. x. 14. How much more, then, may we hope the effect of our prayers for the obtaining of spiritual blessings?

Consider 2.—"Prayer (as St. Augustine saith) is the key of heaven," opening unto us all manner of heavenly treasures; for by prayer we obtain, 1. The Divine Spirit of God: "Your Father from heaven will give the good Spirit to them that ask Him."—Luke xi. 13. 2. Increase of habitual and sanctifying grace. 3. More frequent supplies of actual grace. 4. All manner of virtues and supernatural gifts. Besides, in the exercise thereof our faith is quickened, our hopes raised, and our love and affection inflamed towards God, whom therein we acknowledge to be our chief Benefactor, and Author of all good.

Consider 3.—All this, and whatever else we can desire, for our good, Almighty God is readier to bestow upon us, than we to ask, and doth even anticipate our prayers, according to the words of the prophet: "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will hear; as they are yet speaking, I will hear."—Isa. lxv. 24. And if He denieth us anything, it is our fault in demanding either what we ought not, or not in the manner we ought, but still His mercy; for "God in His mercy (saith St. Augustine) denieth such things which He could not grant, but in wrath." Be grateful for so great a benefit, and avail yourself of it, by a due and constant use in all your occasions.

WEDNESDAY.

THE BENEFIT OF PRAYER.—PART III.

Consider 1.—The words of the wise man: "Before prayer prepare thy soul."—Ecclus. xviii. 23. This preparation consisteth, 1. In an humble heart towards God, acknowledging our sins, and unworthiness to appear in His sight, as did the publican and centurion; for "God hath had regard to the prayer of the humble; and He hath not despised their petition."—Ps. ci. 18. And "the prayer of him that humbleth himself, shall pierce the clouds."—Ecclus. xxxv. 21. 2. In peace and charity with our neighbour, pardoning all injuries and offences: "When you shall stand to pray, forgive, if you have ought against any man," etc.—Mark xi. 25. 3. In putting off all hardness of heart towards the needy; for, as the wise man saith, "He that stoppeth his ear at the cry of the poor, shall also cry himself and shall not be heard."—Prov. xxi. 13.

Consider 2.—In our prayer, we must observe what Christ requireth in those words; "When thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret," etc.—Matt. vi. 6. That is, we must retire ourselves from all distracting objects, and shut the doors of our senses. We must also pray "in spirit and in truth"—John iv. 23;—that is, with a serious and earnest application of mind, intending from our heart what we outwardly express in words, that we may not be in the number of those of whom the prophet speaks: "This people honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me."—Matt. xv. 8. We must, finally, bring a lively faith and confidence: "All things whatsoever you ask, praying (saith Christ), believe that you shall receive, and they shall come unto you."

Consider 3.—The grounds of this confidence, which are chiefly three: 1. The love of the Eternal Father towards us; for, as Christ said, "The Father Himself loveth you"—John xvi. 27;—and who, of His own accord, bestowed His only Son upon us, will not refuse to grant us, upon earnest entreaty, lesser blessings. 2. The merits and passion of Christ, who is our Mediator and Advocate,

and assures us, "Whatsoever you shall ask the Father in My name, that I will do."—John xiv. 13. 3. The intercession which the Divine Spirit Himself doth make for us, who, as the apostle saith, "asketh for us with unspeakable groanings."—Rom. viii. 26.

THE FEAST OF OUR LORD'S ASCENSION.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the King of Glory.

"ARISE, be enlightened, O Jerusalem: for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."—Isa. lx. 1. Consider 1.—Christ is often in the Scripture called the King of Glory, and this day, in a triumphant manner, He ascended the highest heavens, in great glory and majesty: "God is ascended with jubilee, and the Lord with the sound of trumpet."—Ps. xlvi. 6. He is the fountain whence glory is derived to all the blessed, and the several gifts of grace to the faithful; but especially in this day of His triumph, as great princes are wont on like occasions, He prodigally distributeth His gifts and favours among His people according to the words of the apostle: "Ascending on high, He led captivity captive; He gave gifts to men."—Ephes. iv. 8.

Consider 2.—This King of Glory will come this day to you, though under the cloud of the Eucharistic species, to the end, that by the gifts of His grace, He may dispose you to partake also of His glory: "The glory of Libanus shall come to thee," etc., "to beautify the place of My sanctuary, and I will glorify the place of My feet."—Isa. lx. 13. O what a favour and benefit is this! What may you not hope for, from so bountiful a guest, in this day of your solemnity?

Consider 3.—How to receive worthily this King of Glory: "Lift up your gates, O ye princes, and be ye lifted up, O eternal gates: and the King of Glory shall enter in."—Ps. xxiii. 7. The gates of the soul are our interior

powers, reason and will, by which there is a mutual intercourse between our soul and exterior objects, they entering into her, and she going forth to them: lift up, therefore, these gates on high—raise them only to such things as are heavenly and everlasting, and then the King of Glory will enter into you, and make you partaker of His glory.

FRIDAY.

OUR LORD'S ASCENSION.—PART I.

Consider 1.—The forty days being expired, which our Lord was pleased to spend in comforting and instructing the apostles, after His resurrection, "last He appeared to the eleven, as they were at the table"—Mark xvi. 14;—and having strengthened their faith, which wavered yet in some of them, He leads them forth to Mount Olivet, that, where He had begun His passion by His bloody sweat, there He might also begin His triumph. See with what tenderness of love He doth all this; and, withal, learn hence, that the way to glory is by suffering.

Consider 2.—These words of Christ to His disciples: "But you stay in the city till you be endued with power from on high."—Luke xxiv. 49. If our Lord would not have His apostles too forward in preaching, but quietly, and in prayer to expect power and virtue from heaven, how fitting is it, that others who have not been trained up in Christ's school, as they were, should first prepare themselves in private, and holy retiredness, and long prayer, for preaching, and other apostolical functions?

Consider 3.—After they were all come to the mount, our Lord being now to depart, lifting up both His hands, to signify the fulness of His blessing, He blessed them; then, raising Himself up, He ascended by degrees, till He was out of their sight. Think how the disciples rejoiced to behold the glory of their Lord, "making the clouds His chariot: and walking upon the wings of the winds."—Ps. ciii. 3. Do you also ascend in spirit with Him: "in his heart he hath disposed to ascend by steps,"—Ps. lxxxiii. 6,—as the prophet speaketh, making continual progress from one virtue to another, till you arrive to the height of perfection.

SATURDAY.

OUR LORD'S ASCENSION.—PART II.

Consider 1.—Our Lord being out of the sight of His disciples, entered into heaven in a triumphant manner. He was accompanied with an infinite multitude of angels, who came forth to meet Him: there followed a numerous train of the holy Fathers, whom He had redeemed out of captivity, according to that, "ascending on high, He led captivity captive."—Ephes. iv. 8. Neither was there wanting solemn and public jubilee: "God is ascended with jubilee, and the Lord with the sound of trumpet."—Ps. xlvi. 6. The angels inviting one another in those terms: "Sing to the Lord: sing ye to God, who mounteth above the heaven of heavens, to the east"—Ps. lxvii. 33, 34,—and the like.

Consider 2.—Christ being come to the throne of His Eternal Father, presents Him with the holy company of saints, as spoils taken from the infernal enemy; He gives Him the account of the work He had accomplished, saying, "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now glorify Thou Me, O Father, with Thyself," etc. "I have manifested Thy Name to men."—John, xvii. 4, 5, 6, etc. The Father welcometh the Son's return with unspeakable expressions of love, and placeth Him on His right hand; fulfilling that of the psalmist: "The Lord said to My Lord: Sit Thou at My right hand."—Ps. cix. 1, etc.

Consider 3.—The jubilee which was at that time in heaven; of the holy Fathers, for the happiness they were arrived to; of the angels, both for the company of the saints, and for the filling up of the places which had been so long vacant. Lastly, of them all, for the humanity of Christ our Lord, which they saw glorified according to its deserts. Then did they likewise break forth in those words of the Apocalypse: "The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power, and divinity, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and benediction."—Apoc. v. 12. Join your lauds and praises with theirs; rejoice for having such an advocate with your Father, and fix your thoughts there, whither your Head, and best part of you is already gone.

SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as a Pledge of Future Glory.

"THE Lord will give grace and glory. He will not deprive of good things them that walk in innocence."—Ps. lxxxiii. 12, 13. Consider 1.—How great is the glory of God, and of all the blessed in heaven; how excellent a place, what noble citizens, and what happy concord and union among that blessed company, and the like. Our most merciful Lord promiseth us in due time the fellowship of this glory, and in the meanwhile, gives us a pledge—His most precious Body and Blood. Wherefore the Church crieth out: "O sacred banquet, wherein Christ is received, and a pledge of future glory is given us."

Consider 2.—What a great matter you would think it if some prince should promise you a kingdom, after the term of some few years, and in the meantime should give you his only son for security: truly "neither is there any other nation so great, that hath gods so nigh them, as our God is present to all our petitions."—Deut. iv. 7. He is present with us here in nourishment, that He may afterwards be wholly ours in reward.

Consider 3.—This divine pledge doth not only serve as an assurance, but doth, even in this life, produce in some sort the effects of glory, if it be not hindered. For, 1. It brings with it the lustre of habitual grace, than which nothing is more glorious in the sight of God. 2. It rendereth the soul impassible, that is, not subject to be moved or disturbed by any worldly adversity. 3. It gives us a spiritual agility, promptly and readily to obey the commands of God. 4. It affords us also a certain subtility, to go through, and overcome all difficulties. Prepare, yourself, therefore, worthily to receive it, and bless the infinite mercy of God who "hath given the pledge of the Spirit," as the apostle saith, "in our hearts."—2 Cor. i. 22.

MONDAY.

HEAVENLY GLORY AS IT IS IN ITSELF.

Consider 1.—Christ ascended into heaven to prepare us a place: "I go," saith He, "to prepare a place for you."—John xiv. 2. For, "Christ's ascension," as St. Leo saith, "is our promotion; so that where the glory of the head is gone before, there is hope for the rest of the body to follow after." Give God thanks for having vouchsafed to call you; and contemplate the happiness of that state, that you may be the more inflamed with the love of it.

Consider 2.—Heavenly bliss, as the divines define it out of Boetius, "is a state perfected by the concurrence of all good." There are no evils to molest you, or any good wanting which you can desire. "There," saith St. Gregory, "will be light without eclipse, joy without sighs, desire without pain, love without sorrow, satiety without cloying, safety without danger, life without death, health unimpaired, and so of other happiness, without the admixture of those evils, of which nothing in this life is free."

Consider 3.—All these happinesses are everlasting, and never to be lost: wherefore after a thousand millions of years they will not decay or diminish, but will then be as new as ever. "And your joy," saith Christ, "no man shall take from you."—John xvi. 22. Think how different are the enjoyments of this life, which soon pass; and, as St. Bernard saith, "While they are possessed, they burden; while they are loved, they defile; and when they are gone, they torment." See which you will choose to prefer.

TUESDAY.

HEAVENLY GLORY, AS TO THE PLACE AND COMPANY.

Consider 1.—The happiness of the state, in regard of the place, which is the highest heaven, than which nothing can be imagined more beautiful, pleasant, or glorious. "O Israel," said the prophet, "how great is the house of God, and how vast is the place of His possession!"—Baruch iii. 24. This is that city described in the Apocalypse, whose

gates are of pearl, the walls of jasper stone, the foundations of the walls of other precious stone, the streets and the city itself, of pure gold: "The city hath no need of the sun, nor of the moon," etc., "for the Lamb is the lamp thereof."—Apoc. xxi. 23. "How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord."—Ps. lxxxiii. 2, 3.

Consider 2.—The happiness arising from the company. There will be "a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and tribes, and peoples, and tongues," etc.—Apoc. vii. 9. There is to be seen an infinite number without dissension, distinction of degrees; without envy, free communication without confusion. If it be a pleasure in this life to converse with such as are learned, noble, and of agreeable conversation, how much greater pleasure and satisfaction will it be, to have angels for our companions, who are most noble spirits, and endowed with all manner of science and virtue; and to live for ever in the company of patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, virgins, and the other saints of heaven?

Consider 3.—How vile and contemptible all earthly things should appear unto you, while you look up to heaven; and how you ought to esteem all things "but as dung" —Phil. iii. 8—to gain heaven.

WEDNESDAY.

HEAVENLY GLORY, AS TO THE SOUL.

Consider 1.—The essential glory of the soul, which shall be wholly replenished with God, as heated iron is with fire. In the first place, the memory will be employed in the remembrance of most delightful objects, nor shall the mind be ever diverted from the present happiness it enjoyeth. "They shall publish the memory of the abundance of Thy sweetness; and shall rejoice in Thy justice."—Ps. cxliv. 7.

Secondly.—The understanding shall be wholly taken up with the vision of God, intuitively beholding the Divine nature, persons, attributes, and mysteries, that now lie hidden from us. There it will see the profound secrets of God's counsels, and of His providence, both over us, and all others: "We see now through a glass (saith the apostle) in

a dark manner: but then face to face."—1 Cor. xiii. 12. And as St. John saith, "We shall see Him as He is."—1 John iii. 2. O what a happiness! "Thy friends, O God, are made exceedingly honourable!"—Ps. cxxxviii. 17.

Thirdly.—The will, after an unspeakable manner, shall adhere to God, and be as it were transformed into Him by love; whence it will even overflow with the excess of joy; and that of the psalmist will be fulfilled: "They shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house: and Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure."—Ps. xxxv. 9. Their whole life and employment shall be wholly to contemplate, love, and enjoy their Creator, to delight and rejoice in Him, and to praise, bless, thank, and congratulate with Him, for His infinite perfections. Who would not be content to suffer, not only patiently, but also willingly, the afflictions of this life, to purchase such a crown of glory? O how true is it, "that the sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us!"—Rom. viii. 18.

THURSDAY.

HEAVENLY GLORY, AS TO THE BODY.

Consider 1.—The proper gifts of a glorious body: the first is, clearness or brightness, shining like unto the sun: "Then shall the just shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father."—Matt. xiii. 43. The second is impassibility: for, as St. John saith, "They shall no more hunger nor thirst."—Apoc. vii. 16. The third is agility: "The just shall shine, and shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds."—Wisd. iii. 7. The fourth is subtility, whereby they shall be able to penetrate other bodies, and be like unto spirits, free from the embarrassments belonging to the animal life; "as the angels of God."—Matt. xxii. 30.

Consider 2.—The happiness of each sense. 1. The sight shall be delighted in beholding the glorious bodies of the saints, especially of Christ and His Mother: "I know (saith Job) that in my flesh I shall see God my Redeemer."—Job xix. 25, 26. 2. The hearing shall be recreated with heavenly music, hymns and canticles.—Less. de SS. bon. lib. iii. c. 8. 3. The smelling shall be filled with unspeakable

sweetness, issuing forth of the glorified bodies: "Your saints, O Lord, shall flourish as the lily, and shall be as the odour of balm with you." 4. The taste, though not by the way of food, shall have also its proper delight: "Thou shalt make them drink with the torrent of Thy pleasure."—Ps. xxxv. 9. 5. Lastly, the touch shall have its fill of most pure delight, and that all the body over. So that the apostle with good reason did say, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him."—1 Cor. ii. 9.

Consider 3.—What is fit for you to do, to obtain this reward: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence."—Matt. xi. 12. Offer violence to yourself, and you shall have it.

FRIDAY.

THE EXPECTATION OF THE HOLY GHOST.—PART I.

Consider 1.—How the apostles being returned from the mount, whence our Lord ascended, they repair all of them into one room, and by continual prayer, and fervent acts, dispose themselves to receive the Holy Ghost. "All these were persevering with one mind in prayer with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren."—Acts i. 14. The dispositions, therefore, which they used were: 1. Retirement in a private room, far from noise and profane company. 2. Perseverance in prayer. 3. Concord and union of minds. 4. The company of the Blessed Virgin.

Consider 2.—If our Lord would have the apostles to prepare themselves in this manner, for the receiving the Holy Ghost, whom nevertheless He was to send, for the establishing and propagating of His glory, how much more necessary is it for others of the like calling, "to stay in the city," as they did in solitude and retirement; and by continued contemplation of divine things, to prepare themselves, "till they be endued with power from on high"—Luke xxiv. 49,—to exercise their apostolical functions? Do you also imitate the apostles' fervour in seeking the Holy Spirit; say with the prophet, "Create a clean heart in me, O God: and renew a right spirit within my bowels."—Ps. l. 12.

Consider 3.—The coming of the Holy Ghost upon the apostle was deferred ten days; which number in Scripture generally signifieth multitude, that we might learn with long patience to expect our Lord; whose presence, though ever so short, will abundantly recompense whatsoever delay. "God (saith St. Augustine), by deferring, extends our desires; by desiring, enlargeth our heart; by enlarging, makes it the more capacious."—St. Aug. Ep. v. Fran. ar. 4.

SATURDAY.

THE EXPECTATION OF THE HOLY GHOST.—PART II.

Consider 1.—The causes of giving the Holy Ghost: The first was the infinite goodness of God, who "so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son."—John iii. 16. And although the world had treated Him so ill, He would, notwithstanding, also give us the Holy Ghost, who might "teach us all truth."—John xvi. 13. The second were the merits and prayers of Christ: "I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete."—John xiv. 16. The third, for that He was to consummate the work of our redemption, giving us the gifts of His Divine grace, whereby we might obtain heaven.

Consider 2.—The greatness of this gift, than which nothing can be more excellent or divine, for it is God Himself. "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost who is given to us."—Rom. v. 5. With Himself, therefore, He gives us all things; for He is, as the Church singeth, the "bestower of gifts," and "the light of our hearts." He is an overflowing river, whence all manner of grace is derived unto us. "He that believeth in Me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. Now this He said of the Spirit which they should receive who believed in Him."—John vii. 38.

Consider 3.—To whom He is given: First, to poor fishermen; for He is the Father of the poor, "and His communication is with the simple."—Prov. iii. 32. Secondly, He is given to all faithful souls that fervently desire Him: "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh."—Joel ii. 28. Pray, therefore, with a fervent desire, and prepare yourself worthily, that He may come and remain for ever with you.

WHIT-SUNDAY.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as a Fire.

"BEHOLD, the Lord will come with fire."—Isa. lxvi. 15. Consider 1.—How the Holy Ghost descended this day upon the apostles in the form of fire; how He enlightened and inflamed them, and made them quite other men. Think how greatly you stand in need of this heavenly fire, who are so cold in God's service, and all over full of the dross of worldly affections, and have need to be thoroughly purged. "Thy silver is turned into dross," etc. "I will turn My hand to thee, and I will clean purge away thy dross till it be pure, and I will take away all thy tin."—Isa. i. 22, 25.

Consider 2.—Christ in the Eucharist is properly a fire to the soul, but covered with a cloud: "Thy God (saith Moses) is a consuming fire"—Deut. iv. 24,—for it consumes the chaff of terrene affections, takes away the dross of imperfections, inflames our lukewarmness, and illuminates our darkness; and as St. Gregory speaketh, "purifieth the soul, which it doth replenish, from the rust of sin."—Greg. Hom. v. in Ezech. The Eucharist is like to that burning coal taken from the altar, which cleansed the lips of Isaias, and endued him with the spirit of prophecy.—Isa. vi. 7. Confide that it will also work the same effects in your soul, if you be worthily disposed.

Consider 3.—The dispositions to this fire in the apostles were, as hath been said, 1. Retirement. 2. Constant Prayer. 3. Mutual Concord. 4. The Blessed Virgin's company and protection. Imitate, therefore, their example, and take heed, lest being once warmed at this divine fire, you return to your former state of coldness and lukewarmness.

MONDAY.

THE COMING OF THE HOLY GHOST UPON THE APOSTLES.—PART I.

Consider 1.—The time being expired which God had ordained, and the apostles being duly disposed by prayer, the Holy Ghost came upon them, being "all together in one place"—Acts ii. 1,—that you should learn to give yourself to prayer, to follow the community, and flee singularity, if you desire to be visited by the Holy Ghost. Besides, He came suddenly, because His visitation hath no precise time, and therefore, ought without intermission to be sought for, and with long expectation to be attended.

Consider 2.—"And it filled the whole house where they were sitting." Ponder the bounteous liberality of the Divine Spirit, leaving nothing void of His gifts: "The earth is filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the covering waters of the sea."—Isa. xi. 9. And although they were all full, yet one received more than another, according to the greater or lesser capacity of each one's vessel. Whence the Blessed Virgin received more than all the rest. Enlarge, therefore, your vessel or heart, that you may deserve to receive a large proportion. "Open thy mouth wide (saith He, by His prophet), and I will fill it."—Ps. lxxx. 11.

Consider 3.—"And there appeared to them parted tongues as of fire." The Holy Ghost took upon Him the form of fiery tongues, because, as St. Gregory saith, "whom He replenisheth, He maketh both fervent and eloquent." Desire Him to effect both in you; the first for your own good, the other for the benefit and edification of others.

TUESDAY.

THE COMING OF THE HOLY GHOST, ETC.—PART II.

Consider 1.—"And they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak."—Acts ii. 4. Ponder 1. The greatness of the miracle; poor fishermen, that were ignorant and unlearned, speak the language of all nations. Ponder 2. What they speak of; to wit, "the great works of Christ," not of vain trifles or

worldly rumours. So, those who are full of God, speak not but of such things as are of God; for, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." —Matt. xii. 34. See, therefore, whether "thy speech doth discover thee"—Matt. xxvi. 73,—and prove that thou art full of the world, not of God.

Consider 2.—"The multitude came together, and were confounded in mind," whereof some did believe; "but others, mocking, said: These men are full of new wine." So, that there will not be ever wanting those that will laugh at good works; but we must not, therefore, leave off. Beseech our Lord to make you drunk with the like wine; for, "he whom God's love doth inebriate (saith Saint Bernard) knoweth how Jesus doth relish. Oh! how happy is that man whom He doth satiate; there is not anything left him to desire."

Consider 3.—The effects which the Holy Ghost doth work in a faithful soul. "Be ye filled with the spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord"—Ephes. v. 18, 19,—saith the apostle. See whether you do so; at least excite and stir yourself up to like actions.

WEDNESDAY.

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST.—PART I.

Consider 1.—How bountiful the Divine Spirit is to us, who having no need of us in the least, notwithstanding doth liberally bestow upon us most precious and beneficial gifts, which are, as St. Thomas saith, habits enabling a man to follow promptly the instinct of the Holy Ghost, chiefly in order to noble and heroic acts, and are commonly accounted seven, out of Isaias, to wit: "The spirit of wisdom, and of understanding, the spirit of counsel, and of fortitude, the spirit of knowledge, and of godliness, and the spirit of the fear of the Lord."—Isa. xi. 2.

Consider 2.—These gifts serve us as spiritual armours to strengthen our several infirmities; for, "the Spirit (saith St. Paul) helpeth our infirmity."—Rom. viii. 26. Therefore, "He giveth us (as St. Gregory teacheth) wisdom against

folly, understanding against dulness, counsel against rashness, fortitude against fear, science against ignorance, piety against indevotion, the fear of the Lord against pride."

Consider 3.—How much you are subject to these infirmities; how foolishly you prefer the things of this life before eternity; how dull and heavy you are in all things appertaining to the service of God; and so of the rest. Beseech the Divine Spirit to arm you with the seven-fold shield of His gifts; say with the Church, "Come, Holy Spirit, send forth a beam of Your heavenly light," etc.

THURSDAY.

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST.—PART II.

Consider 1.—By the aforesaid gifts we are not only helped against whatsoever infirmities, for the avoiding of evil, but also provided with excellent helps for the obtaining of good. 1. Wisdom helpeth to understand the Divine perfections of God, and that with gust and affections of love. 2. Understanding, to penetrate the mysteries of faith, and the profound secrets that lie hidden therein. 3. Knowledge, to contemplate, with profit, created things, as they proceed from and lead us to God, and improve our life and manners.

Consider 2.—We are also helped by "counsel" in our doubts and perplexities: "For the thoughts of mortal men are fearful, and our counsels uncertain"—Wisd. ix. 14,—"And the heart fancieth as that of a woman in travail: except it be a vision sent forth from the Most High, set not thy heart upon them."—Ecclus. xxxiv. 6. And because it is dangerous to trust to ourselves, by the gift of counsel we are moved to let ourselves be led by others, especially superiors and spiritual directors, according to the wise man: "Establish within thyself a heart of good counsel;" and persuade yourself, that the soul of a holy man uttereth true things, etc.—Ecclus. xxxvii. 17, 18.

Consider 3.—By fortitude we are encouraged to undergo manfully whatsoever difficulties and dangers are in God's service, and with an undaunted courage to suffer torments and martyrdom. By piety we are informed to carry ourselves as children towards our superiors, as mothers towards

our inferiors, with the bowels of charity, and as brethren to our equals. Lastly, "The fear of the Lord hateth evil"—Prov. viii. 13,—and preserves us from sin, even the least, "Because he that feareth God neglecteth nothing."—Eccles. vii. 19. Therefore, beg these gifts of our Lord, "who giveth to all men abundantly."—James i. 5.

FRIDAY.

THE FRUITS OF THE HOLY GHOST.

Consider 1.—The Holy Ghost is like a great tree whose top reacheth to heaven, and whose branches shadow the whole earth; its fruits are recounted by the apostle, twelve in number. "The fruit of the Spirit is, charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity."—Gal. v. 22, 23. These are most precious fruit, and full of all sweetness. "And His fruit (saith the spouse), was sweet to my palate."—Cant. ii. 3.

Consider 2.—And examine yourself, whether you have the Spirit of God, and whether you be partaker of His fruits; for, "by their fruits you shall know them"—Matt. vii. 16,—saith Christ. Think, therefore, with yourself, how charitable you are, how patient, how mild, and modest, and so of the rest; for, if you find yourself destitute of these, it is a sign the Divine Spirit hath not as yet overshadowed you, nor come into you, for he that liveth in the Spirit, also walketh in the Spirit.—Gal. v. 25.

Consider 3.—The prime disposition requisite for receiving the Holy Ghost, is a pure intention of serving God in all things, for His own sake, not for worldly respect; for, as the wise man saith, "The Holy Spirit of discipline will flee from the deceitful."—Wisd. i. 3. Wherefore, endeavour to please Him in all things, and to conform yourself to the discipline of the place and calling you are of; and that not in the outward show only, but sincerely and from the heart.

SATURDAY.

THE MANNER OF LIFE WHICH THE HOLY GHOST INSPIRED INTO THE FIRST CHRISTIANS.

Consider 1.—"They were persevering in the doctrine of the apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers"—Acts ii. 42;—for chiefly by these three things spiritual life is nourished and increased, to wit: 1. By hearing or reading the Word of God. 2. By frequenting the sacraments, and principally that of the altar. 3. By continual prayer. Do you likewise insist chiefly upon these.

Consider 2.—Their living in common: "All they that believed, were together, and had all things common."—Acts ii. 44. Their charity and mutual concord: "And the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul."—Acts iv. 32. Their evangelical poverty, for love of which, "as many as were owners of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the price of the things they sold, and laid it down before the feet of the apostles," etc.—"Neither did any one say that aught of the things which he possessed was his own, but all things were common unto them."

Consider 3.—The rest of their life they were "daily continuing with one accord in the temple; and breaking bread from house to house," as well the eucharistic bread in communion, as common bread in hospitality: "They took their meat with joy and simplicity of heart, praising God, and having grace with all the people." How far are we from the like fervour, assiduity of prayer, and simplicity of heart? Let us, therefore, imitate their example, that we may come to enjoy their company in heaven.

TRINITY SUNDAY.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the Second Person of the Most Blessed Trinity.

"LORD, if I have found grace in Thy sight, pass not away from Thy servant."—Gen. xviii. 3. Consider 1.—What faith teacheth us concerning this most sacred mystery: to wit, Three Persons subsistent in one single nature, or essence of Divinity, the Father unbegotten, His only begotten Son, and the Holy Ghost, proceeding from both. Imagine yourself to see innumerable millions of saints and angels in heaven prostrate before the throne of the Divinity, with most profound reverence and admiration of this incomprehensible mystery, and continually singing forth, "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of Hosts."—Isa. vi. 3.

Consider 2.—The Second Person of the sacred Trinity will abide with you this day, and with Him the other two, the Father and the Holy Ghost, who being the self-same in nature with the Son, in a special manner are also present in the Eucharist. What entertainment, therefore, will be fitting for such guests, what care of neatness, and adorning yourself with acts of virtue.

Consider 3.—With what fervour, humility and devotion, Abraham entertained the three angels, who represented the blessed Trinity: "He received three, but adored only one" (saith St Augustine), saying, "Lord, if I have found grace in thy sight, go not past thy servant." Then he ran to the herd, took thence one of the best calves, and caused it to be boiled and set before them. Do you the like, and present your guests with the best you have, to wit, your heart well prepared by the fire of charity, and say with the Church, "Blessed be the holy and undivided Trinity, now and for ever."

MONDAY.

THE FIRST PERSON OF THE BLESSED TRINITY—THE ETERNAL FATHER.

Consider 1.—The Eternal Father, as faith teacheth, is the fountain and origin of the other Persons in the blessed Trinity; for understanding Himself by an intuitive vision, He begetteth the Eternal Word, that is, a most perfect and substantial image of Himself, which is the Son, "the image of God and the figure of His substance."—2 Cor. iv. 4; Heb. i. 3. And, again, together with the Son, by mutual love, breatheth forth the Holy Ghost, communicating unto them both His entire nature without division, retaining in Himself His own proper personality uncommunicated. Admire the sublimity of this mystery: stir yourself up to acts of faith, and acknowledge how weak man's understanding is to comprehend divine things: "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God!" etc.—Rom. xi. 33.

Consider 2.—Although all exterior works of God are common to the whole Trinity, notwithstanding, those of power and omnipotency are appropriated to the Father, such are the creation, preservation, and government of the world; whence, you may learn both how much you ought to love Him who created you, and for your sake produced His admirable structure of the universe, and how much reason you have to "to fear Him, who," in a moment, "can destroy both soul and body into hell."—Matt. x. 28.

Consider 3.—This Father, and Lord of all things, notwithstanding the greatness of His majesty, stoopeth so low beneath Himself for love of us—who, at the best, are but His slaves and vassals—as to make us His children, and heirs by adoption: "For the Father Himself loveth you"—John xvi. 27,—said Christ. Nay, "God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son"—John iii. 16—for its redemption. See, therefore, how much reason you have to love and reverence with your whole heart, and with all your strength, so loving a Father.

TUESDAY.

THE SECOND PERSON OF THE BLESSED TRINITY—THE SON.

Consider 1.—That, as faith teacheth, the Son was begotten from all eternity, without the least difference of time, or point of inequality; for He is consubstantial, co-eternal, and in all things equal to the Father; He is properly the Word of the divine intellect, expressing in Himself the whole substance of the Divinity, which being made, as it were, vocal by the Incarnation, declared unto us the secret mysteries of the Father—"Who shall declare His generation?"—Isa. liii. 8. Neither the angels themselves can comprehend this unspeakable procession: therefore, what you cannot conceive either by sense or reason, believe with a firm faith, and rejoice for the glory of the Son, equal in all things with the Father.

Consider 2.—The Son's love towards mankind, who, to redeem His slave, delivered himself over to death: "For us men and for our salvation, descended from heaven, and was incarnate," and born, and that in so humble and contemptible a manner; God was made "man, that man might be made God;" or, as St. Leo saith, "Christ was made the Son of man, that we might be made the sons of God." O ineffable love! O incomprehensible favour!

Consider 3.—How you may requite so great a love. Doubtless, it requires that you both reverence His Divine person with the greatest devotion and respect, and with as great tenderness, love that Sacred humanity which He took upon Him, and nailed to the cross for your sake; say with St. Bernard, "The more vile He is become for me, so much the more dear He is to me;" and take heed, lest by sinning, you alienate from you so loving a friend.

WEDNESDAY.

THE THIRD PERSON OF THE BLESSED TRINITY—THE HOLY GHOST.

Consider 1.—The Holy Ghost as the third person of the Blessed Trinity, proceeding from the Father and the Son,

but co-eternal and consubstantial to them both, of equal power, wisdom, and so of the other Divine attributes; for there is, as the Church singeth, "Property in the persons, unity in the essence, and equality in Majesty." Do you also reverence and honour this Divine Person; join your voice with the seraphim, crying out, "Holy, holy, holy," etc.—Isa. vi. 3.

Consider 2.—The Holy Ghost appeared over our Lord in the form of a dove, both to express His love towards us, for the dove is a symbol of sociable love; and withal, to teach us mildness and simplicity in our life and actions. To Him likewise are attributed the works of our justification, the distribution of graces, and the benefits of inspirations and illuminations: "The Spirit breatheth where He will; and thou hearest His voice."—John iii. 8. That you may, hence, see how much you stand in need of His Divine protection.

Consider 3.—The Holy Ghost doth not only communicate the gifts of His grace, but also His own substance and person to the just, inhabiting and abiding in them after a special manner, as divines teach, according to the words of the apostle: "Know you not, that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you?"—1 Cor. vi. 19. See, therefore, that you make not His temple a den of thieves by sin. Beg of Him by continual prayer, that He would "wash away what is unclean in you, water what is dry, heal what is wounded, bend what is stiff and unruly, cherish what is cold and faint, redress what is amiss."

CORPUS CHRISTI DAY.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the Institutor of the most Blessed Sacrament.

"He hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works, etc. He hath given food to them that fear Him."—Ps. cx. 4, 5. Consider 1.—How much you are indebted to Christ, for instituting so admirable and beneficial a mystery, from which, as from a fountain, all manner of good doth flow:

for the Eucharist—1. Is properly a sacrifice for our sins. 2. Spiritual food to keep us in heart. 3. A lively memorial of our Lord's passion. 4. The spring and fountain of all grace and virtue. "His blessing (saith Ecclesiasticus) hath overflowed like a river."—Ecclus. xxxix. 27.

Consider 2.—This Divine Institutor, who several ways had showed Himself wonderful in His other works, would in this single one employ all the treasures of His power and wisdom, for in the Eucharist they are discovered: 1. His infinite wisdom in inventing so admirable a food. 2. The like power in the transubstantiation of bread and wine. 3. His goodness in communicating Himself, and penetrating our very bowels, in the nature of meat and drink. 4. His liberality in giving Himself wholly to each one, even to the wicked. 5. Patience in permitting Himself to be unworthily handled, and even trodden under foot, sometimes by the wicked; and so of other virtues: "He hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works, etc. He hath given food to them that fear Him."

Consider 3.—Hence, the Church, with good reason, in these days doth celebrate the memory of this mystery with great pomp and solemnity. If the ark of God formerly was carried with so great state, the king himself dancing all the way before it, how much more honour doth the Holy Eucharist deserve? Go forth, therefore, to meet it in the best array of your soul; praise, honour, and thank the author of it; at least, "do what you are able, because He is above all praise, and you cannot praise Him sufficiently."

FRIDAY.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST COMPARED WITH THE MANNA. PART I.

Consider 1.—Nothing in the ancient law was more wonderful than the manna, which for forty years together fell daily from heaven, for the sustenance of the people; whence David said of it: "He hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works," etc.—Ps. cx. 4. Consider, therefore, twelve admirable properties of it, in a far more perfect manner expressed in the Eucharist:—

1.—The manna was bread, but without seed or tillage;

not growing out of the earth, but coming down from heaven: so the Holy Eucharist; "This is the bread that came down from heaven."—John vi. 59. And the Sacred Body of Christ, which is contained therein, proceeded not by human generation, but from the Virgin alone, and by the divine influence of the Holy Ghost.

2.—The manna was made only by angels, whence it is called "the bread of angels"—Ps. lxxvii. 25,—and the Eucharist only by priests, who are the "angels of the Lord of Hosts"—Mal. ii. 7—upon earth.

3.—The manna contained in itself alone "all that is delicious, and the sweetness of every taste;" so the Eucharist "surpasseth (saith St. Cyprian) all delicacies prepared for the taste, and all the dainties of sweet meats." —Cyp. tract. de Cœna Dom.

4.—The manna in such variety of taste and delight, yet did relish different to each one, according as they desired: for, "serving every man's will, it was turned to what every man liked"—Wisd. xvi. 21;—so the Eucharist afforded whatsoever virtue any one can desire: to some humility, to others chastity, and so of the rest.

5.—The sweetness of the manna was hidden, and enjoyed only by the just; whence the wicked complained, saying, "Our soul now loatheth this very light food"—Numb. xxi. 5;—so with sinners, the Eucharist relisheth no better than ordinary bread, and, therefore, is called "a hidden manna."

6.—The manna was like to the seed of coriander, whose property it is said to be, that though it be broken into ever so many pieces, yet it retains in it every one the whole virtue or strength of the seed; so the Eucharist, though broken into a thousand parts, still "as much will remain in one single particle, as was before in the whole."

SATURDAY.

THE HOLY EUCHARIST COMPARED WITH THE MANNA. PART II.

Consider the other properties. 7.—Therefore, manna was given in an equal measure to every one: "Neither had he more that had gathered more: nor did he find less

that had provided less"—Exod. xvi. 18;—so in the Eucharist, "one takes, a thousand takes; but as much he, as they," etc.

8.—The manna was to be gathered betimes, before the sun rising, otherwise it presently melted away, although within doors it would bear both fire and water: "That it might be known to all (saith the wise man), that we ought to prevent the sun to bless Thee"—Wisd. xvi. 28;—so the Eucharist doth impart its sweetness, not to slothful and sluggish people, but to the fervent: "They that in the morning early watch for Me, shall find Me."—Prov. viii. 17.

9.—The manna in an equal proportion, served as well men as children, old and young; so the Eucharist, still the same in itself, doth work differently in all, according to their capacity, and the disposition they bring.

10.—The manna, being kept only till the next day, out of covetousness, became full of worms, and putrefied; yet, being laid up by God's command in a golden vessel, lasted uncorrupt for many generations; so the Eucharist, to them that receiveth unworthily, turneth to corruption, and to their greater judgment and damnation; but in the golden vessel of a good and perfect heart, it becometh the seed of eternal life.

11.—The manna, all the time of the pilgrimage, for forty years together, never failed; so likewise the Eucharist is our constant and never failing provision, during the time of our pilgrimage: "I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."—Matt. xxviii. 20.

12.—The manna fell daily, without intermission, except Sabbath-days, on which they lived upon what they had gathered the day before. The Eucharist is our daily bread in this life, but will cease on the Sabbath of eternal repose, where we shall live for ever upon what we have gathered in this life.

SUNDAY IN OCTAVE OF CORPUS CHRISTI.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider the Eucharist as a Banquet.—Part I.

"COME, eat my bread, and drink the wine which I have mingled for you."—Prov. ix. 5. Consider 1.—What is read this day in the gospel: "A certain man made a great supper," etc.—Luke xiv. 16. This man is Christ, and the Eucharist the supper or banquet to which all men are invited: "Come to me all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you."—Matt. xi. 28. Never was there, from the beginning of the world, by any prince, made so sumptuous and magnificent a banquet; wherefore, prepare your soul, that it may be replenished with this heavenly nourishment, and ponder its admirable properties.

1.—It is infinite in greatness, made not for one city or province, but for all nations to feed on: "The Lord of Hosts shall make unto all people in this mountain, a feast of fat things, a feast of wine."—Isa. xxv. 6.

2.—It is perpetual and never failing, and not for many days only, as was that of Assuerus, nor yet for some years; it hath already lasted above eighteen hundred years, and is to last yet, "even to the consummation of the world."—Matt. xxviii. 20.

3.—It is furnished with admirable variety, containing in itself, as the wise man saith, "all that is delicious, and the sweetness of every taste."—Wisd. xvi. 20.

4.—The meat of this feast is most wholesome: "He that eateth this bread shall live for ever."—John vi. 59.

5.—It is most delicious: "He fed them with the fat of wheat, and filled them with honey out of the rock"—Ps. lxxx. 17;—and "the rock (saith St. Paul) was Christ."—1 Cor. x. 4.

6.—It is most exquisite; for what is there more rare and excellent than the only Son of God? "See ye that I alone am, and there is no other God besides Me."—Deut. xxxii. 39.

7.—It is most precious; for what can be more precious than that blood which was the ransom of the whole world?

Therefore, come unto this divine feast with a longing desire, and say with the Church, "O sacred feast, in which Christ is received, the memory of His passion is renewed, our mind filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory given us."

MONDAY.

THE EUCHARIST AS A BANQUET.—PART II.

Consider 1.—Besides the fare, also the dignity of the guests, the quality and number of waiters, and the sumptuous service of the meat, in plate of gold, silver, etc., do make to the commendation and magnificence of the feast. "Baltassar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his nobles"—Dan. v. 1,—in gold and silver vessels. The guests in this banquet are the three Divine Persons of the most Blessed Trinity. What more royal and divine? "If any man shall open to Me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."—Apoc. iii. 20. And in another place: "If any one love Me," etc., "My Father will love Him, and we will come to Him, and will make our abode with Him."—John xiv. 23.

Consider 2.—The waiters are angels, the most excellent of all creatures by nature: "Thousands of thousands ministered to Him: and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before Him."—Dan. vii. 10. They assist, therefore, their Lord, as the holy Fathers say, in time of Divine sacrifice; and so long as He remains personally with you, they also attend you; that you may learn, even by this, with what reverence you ought to behave yourself in time of communion.

Consider 3.—The furniture and service in the outward show, are but mean and plain, but in truth surpass all the power of nature; for the food of life is handed to you under the veil of accidents, which are miraculously preserved without their proper substance; than which there is no greater wonder in nature. Learn, therefore, hence, how well adorned with virtues you ought to come to this heavenly banquet: "Be ye clean (saith the prophet), you that carry the vessels of the Lord."—Isa. lii. 11. How much more you that receive within you the Lord Himself.

TUESDAY.

THE EUCHARIST COMPARED TO THE TREE OF LIFE, AND ITS FRUITS.—PART I.

Consider 1.—How the tree of Life in paradise restored the decaying forces of nature, and kept man, who was then immortal, in continual repair. And in the Apocalypse it is said: "The angel showed me the tree of life, bearing twelve fruits," etc.—Apoc. xxii. 2. The Eucharist is "the bread of life"—John vi. 48,—so called by Christ, because by His grace, which it giveth, it makes us immortal, and yieldeth twelve sorts of fruit, most sovereign against so many infirmities or miseries, as St. Thomas teacheth, that man's nature is subject to by sin.

Our first misery doth arise from the assaults of the devil, who, "as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour."—1 Pet. v. 8. Against this the Eucharist doth arm us, giving strength both to resist, and to chase our adversary away, like to that fish of Tobias, whereof it is said: "The smoke thereof driveth away all kinds of devils."—Tob. vi. 8.

The second misery is, the rebellion of concupiscence, of which the apostle saith: "I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind."—Rom. vii. 23. "Another law," that is, concupiscence of sin in our members: as in the eye to covet, in the tongue to slander, etc. This heat of concupiscence is allayed by the Holy Eucharist; to which purpose the manna is said to have lain "like unto the hoar-frost on the ground."—Exod. xvi. 14. And our Lord, by the prophet: "I will be as the dew; Israel shall spring as the lily."—Osee xiv. 6.

The third is the stain and corruption of the heart: "For there is no just man upon earth, that doth good, and sinneth not."—Eccles. vii. 21. This the Eucharist doth cleanse, like to the burning coal that cleanseth the lips of Isaias.—Isa. vi. 6.

The fourth is the offence to the Creator. This also the Eucharist taketh away, appeasing His wrath and indignation against us: "A secret present (saith the wise man) quencheth anger."—Prov. xxi. 14. There is no gift more

acceptable than the only Son of God, who is truly hidden, and offered to His Eternal Father in the Eucharist.

WEDNESDAY.

THE EUCHARIST COMPARED TO THE TREE OF LIFE, AND ITS FRUITS.—PART II.

The fifth misery is want of the knowledge of ourselves: "Darkness was upon the face of the deep"—Gen. i. 2,—so it is likewise upon the heart of that man that is not enlightened with the grace of God. Therefore the prophet saith: "The heart is perverse above all things, and unsearchable: who can know it?"—Jer. xvii. 9. The Eucharist remedieth this; enlightening our understanding, like to the honey that enlightened the eyes of Jonathan: "You have seen yourselves that my eyes are enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey."—1 Kings xiv. 29.

The sixth is want of love towards God and our neighbour; for, where "iniquity hath abounded, charity shall grow cold."—Matt. xxiv. 12. This is cured by the Eucharist, which inflames the heart with Divine love; for "the lamps thereof are fire and flames."—Cant. viii. 6.

The seventh is the disposition of our spiritual appetite, whereby we relish not spiritual things; for, "the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God"—1 Cor. ii. 14,—and he that feedeth himself with the pleasures of this present life, his inferior senses are so disordered thereby, that he cannot relish spiritual things. The Eucharist remedies this, curing the palate of our heart, so that we may "taste and see that the Lord is sweet."—Ps. xxxiii. 9.

The eighth is a faintness in perfecting what is good; we often begin fervently, but soon fall. "This man began to build, and was not able to finish."—Luke xiv. 30. Against this the Holy Eucharist doth strengthen us; like to that loaf of bread, which the angel brought to Elias, "In the strength of that food he walked forty days and forty nights," without any toil, "unto the Mount of God, Horeb."—3 Kings xix. 8. Beg, therefore, of our Lord these fruits, especially that you may be constant in good; for, "of all virtues (said St. Bernard) perseverance alone is crowned."

THURSDAY.

THE EUCHARIST COMPARED TO THE TREE OF LIFE, AND ITS FRUITS.—PART III.

Our ninth misery is the penalty of eternal death; for "we were (as the apostle saith) by nature children of wrath."—Ephesians ii. 3. From this evil the Eucharist freeth us, giving us eternal life! For, "if any man eat of this bread (saith our Lord), he shall live for ever."—John vi. 52.

The tenth is our continual decay in good, passing daily from bad to worse: "For the imagination and thought of man's heart are prone to evil from his youth."—Gen. viii. 21. This is taken away by means of the Holy Eucharist, whereby, as by spiritual food, man groweth in spiritual life, and increaseth in merits of good works: "For he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit."—John xv. 5.

The eleventh is the irksomeness of this worldly banishment; of which David saith, "Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged!"—Ps. cxix. 5. The Eucharist doth mitigate this tediousness, and is given also as viaticum, or provision to live upon in this our pilgrimage, as was the manna to the Israelites in the desert, till they were brought into the land of promise, which to us is the kingdom of everlasting glory.

The twelfth is a total corruption of our corporal substance; because "dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return."—Gen. iii. 19. And thus, according to the course of nature, this our body would perish for ever; but, by reason of the corporal participation of Christ, as St. Thomas saith, the saints shall rise again in their bodies, more glorious than the sun; according to the words of Christ; "He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up in the last day."—John vi. 55.

Admire the wonderful virtue of these heavenly fruits, and be thankful for so powerful a remedy and preservative against all your maladies: "Bless the Lord, O my soul," etc., "who healeth all thy diseases."

FRIDAY.

OF PREPARATION FOR RECEIVING THE HOLY EUCHARIST BY FAITH AND PURITY.

Consider 1.—How necessary is a due preparation for receiving the Holy Eucharist, lest otherwise, through mortal sin, you make that your poison, which is the food of life; or through indevotion or lukewarmness, you partake less of its sweetness. Therefore the apostle admonisheth: "Let a man prove himself: and so let him eat of that bread"—1 Cor. xi. 28;—and he that presumed to come to the marriage feast without the wedding garment, was cast into the exterior darkness.—Matt. xxii. 13.

Consider 2.—The first preparation must be by faith; which is, as it were, the ground and foundation of all the rest; therefore the apostle saith, "Let us draw near with a true heart in fulness of faith."—Heb. x. 22. Kindle, therefore, in yourself a lively faith, as often as you frequent this sacred mystery, and denying whatsoever sense shall object to the contrary, offer your life and blood to defend the truth of God's word.

Consider 3.—The second preparation must be by purity, which the greater it shall be, the more you will partake of its divine fruits, and taste of its hidden sweetness; wherefore the prophet saith, "Be ye clean, you that carry the vessels of the Lord."—Isa. lii. 11. The same doth the Church recommend unto us, by ordaining the holy Eucharist to be consecrated upon clean corporals; which, as St. Thomas observes, are first washed, then wrung, and thirdly, dried; so he that goes to receive this sacrament, must first of all be washed with the tears of penance, then wrung by works of mortification, and thirdly, well dried of worldly affections, by the fervour of charity. See whether you find these dispositions in yourself.

SATURDAY.

PREPARATION FOR RECEIVING THE HOLY EUCHARIST BY HOLY DESIRES AND PRAYER.

Consider 1.—To this purity must be joined an ardent desire and hunger after this heavenly banquet; for our Lord

inviteth such to Himself, in those words: "Come over to Me, all ye that desire Me, and be filled with My fruits"—Ecclus. xxiv. 26,—and by the psalmist He telleth us, that "He hath satisfied the empty soul," that is, the thirsty soul, "and hath filled the hungry soul with good things."—Ps. cvi. 9. Procure, therefore, in yourself this hunger and thirst, as often as you come to this Divine table; "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it"—Ps. lxxx. 11,—saith the Lord.

Consider 2.—To this desire must be added earnest prayer, for God bestoweth all He hath upon them that ask; therefore, saith David, "They asked, and the quail came: and He filled them with the bread of heaven."—Ps. civ. 40. If, therefore, you desire to have your fill of this Heavenly bread, you must make earnest suit for it, and give yourself to prayer and meditation. "I sat down under His shadow, whom I desired," that is, in holy meditation and contemplation; whence, having had experience of its sweetness, the spouse presently adds, "and His fruit was sweet to my palate."—Cant. ii. 3.

Consider 3.—You must not wonder, if, after diligent preparation on your part, you do not always perceive the sweetness of this Heavenly food. For, as the physician to some patients prescribeth such medicine as is pleasing to their sensitive palate or appetite; to others again, such as is agreeable only to the rational appetite, as being more wholesome than palatable: so God doth temper the sweetness of this Heavenly food, that it doth relish to some by effectual devotion, to others only by the knowledge and satisfaction they receive of its great profit and benefit, as He knows to be most expedient for every one. Submit yourself, therefore, to this Heavenly Physician, and beg of Him to give you that relish, which He knoweth to be most for your benefit.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as a Shepherd, seeking after some of His strayed Sheep.

"I HAVE gone astray like a sheep that is lost; seek Thy servant."—Ps. cxviii. 176. Consider 1.—What is read to-day in the Gospel, of a shepherd, who having a hundred sheep in his flock, went to seek one that had gone astray—Luke xv. 4;—consider how Christ is this Shepherd. Ponder His exceeding care of this one lost sheep, whereas He had ninety-nine, that is, innumerable others, to wit, angels, feeding on the Eternal hills. He wanted neither the wool nor milk of this wandering sheep, and yet seeketh up and down, everywhere, in anxiety and labour, to find it out, and, having found it, He neither beats nor abuses it, but lays it on His shoulders, and brings it home. O God, "What is man, that Thou shouldst magnify him? or why dost Thou set Thy heart upon him?"—Job vii. 17.

Consider 2.—That your soul in particular is a strayed sheep, which hath hitherto wandered up and down through the thickets and briars of your own inventions, out of your fold, and out of the bounds of that perfection which God hath called you to. You do not yield Him the wool of your exterior actions, nor the milk of your interior; you take no delight in His rich and pleasant pastures, but rather cast yourself upon the vile pastures of worldly delights. "All we like sheep have gone astray, every one hath turned aside into his own way"—Isa. liii 6,—saith the prophet.

Consider 3.—This loving Pastor will come to-day unto you to bring you back into your right way; therefore, implore His pardon, for having hitherto so foolishly gone astray, and that you have not been more attentive to His call and holy inspirations. Offer Him, henceforward, the wool and milk of all your actions. Say with the prophet, "I have gone astray like a sheep that is lost: seek Thy servant, because I have not forgotten Thy commandments."

MEDITATIONS

ON THE

LIFE AND DOCTRINE OF OUR LORD, FROM HIS BAPTISM TO HIS PASSION.

THE life and doctrine of Christ, during the time of His three years' preaching, yield plentiful matter for meditation. But because we cannot go through with every passage, we will insist upon the chief, and therein follow, not so much the order of the history, which is often in controversy, as a certain similitude and connexion of one matter with another, as we find others to have done before us.

MONDAY.

THE PREACHING OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST.—PART I.

Consider 1.—The preaching of John goeth before the preaching of Christ, as doth the break of day before the rising of the sun; for of him it is said, "Behold I send My angel before Thy face, who shall prepare the way before Thee."—Mark i. 2. John, therefore, was an angel, both by office—Mal. iii. 1,—and in the innocence of his life and manners, such as ought to be all priests, who are often in the Scripture called angels.—Mal. ii. 7.

Consider 2.—More particularly the admirable virtues of this holy preacher. First, his austerity of life; for as the Evangelist testifieth, "He had his garment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat was locusts and wild honey."—Matt. iii. 4. Doubtless, his lodging and bed were answerable; likely, the bare ground, under some den or cave; nor had he any better defence against the cold of winter, and heat of summer. Think how much you come short of this great preacher, who are

not content with those conveniencies which your state of life affords you.

Consider 3.—This austerity of life was accompanied with continual contemplation of heavenly things, wherein he spent his whole life, to the thirtieth year of his age. Admire his constancy in so long a warfare, for there can be no doubt, but that in all that time he had many combats with the enemy of mankind. Ponder his incomparable innocence of life, without committing the least venial sin, as most are of opinion; and withal endeavour to imitate and come as near him as you can.

TUESDAY.

PREACHING OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST.—PART II.

Consider 1.—The subject of this preaching was nothing but penance, saying, "Do penance," etc., to which he exhorts his auditors, by proposing to them, first, hopes of the kingdom of heaven, then the fear of God's most severe judgment, representing Him with "His fan in His hand," to cleanse the wheat from the chaff. Think how much you stand in need of this penance. See whether you be wheat or chaff; if the first, see you do not degenerate; if the second, endeavour to convert yourself, by the divine assistance, into pure wheat, that you may not deserve to be cast into "unquenchable fire."

Consider 2.—Those words: "Every tree that doth not yield good fruit shall be cut down, and cast into the fire." It is not enough to produce any kind of fruit, but it must be good. Examine your works, what they are, whether good, solid, and perfect, or rather counterfeited, and fair only to the outward appearance, or at least imperfect, and not of full growth and maturity, lest that may be said of you, "I looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it hath brought forth wild grapes."—Isa. v. 4. And that other, "Cut it down therefore; why cumbereth it the ground?"—Luke xiii. 7.

Consider 3.—John beginneth not, but at a mature age, and after a long preparation, by prayer and mortification. But then, by the impulse of the Divine Spirit, by whose inspiration also he had before retired himself, entereth with

an invincible courage upon his charge. For the Holy Ghost is wont to set them, whom He hath once perfected, upon the perfecting of others. Your desert is a private, retired life, wherein you must prepare yourself by prayer, mortification, and holy solitude, attending to God alone, that you may prove the fitting instrument either of the gospel, if such be your calling, or of your own, and your neighbour's perfection.

WEDNESDAY.

THE JEWS' MESSAGE TO JOHN.—PART I.

Consider 1.—The Jews, moved with the sanctity of John, made great resort unto him; and not only the common people, but the chief magistrates began to doubt whether he were not Christ. Therefore they "sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites to him, to ask him: Who art thou?"—John i. 19. Ponder how powerful innocence of life is to move men's minds; and how true is that which St. Bernard said, that "louder is the voice of works than of words."

Consider 2.—The divers acts of humility of St. John on this occasion; for, whereas, he was in such esteem with the Jews, as to be held for Christ, he did not, therefore, vainly vaunt himself above what he was, as worldly men are wont, in similar occasions; but "confessed, and did not deny: and he confessed: I am not the Christ." This is the first degree of humility, to disown what he knew belonged not unto himself, and to resign it where it was due. See whether you do not otherwise, making yourself more than you are, and concealing what you in reality are.

Consider 3.—How, when the Jews demanded again whether he were not Elias, or some prophet, he answered, "No." He might have given himself out for Elias in spirit, though not in person, and for a prophet, and more than a prophet, as he was styled by the angel, and by Christ Himself. But he that is truly humble, doth not only refuse what is not his own, but also takes off, as far as truth will permit it, from what is his due. He never commendeth himself, but rather, as St. Bernard saith, "as much as lies in him, will not be known what he is."

THURSDAY.

THE JEWS' MESSAGE TO JOHN.—PART II.

Consider 1.—The Jews still urging him to give some account of himself, he said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Make straight the way of the Lord."—John i. 23. He boasteth not of his race, parents, priesthood, etc., as worldly men are wont. He calleth himself a voice, expressing thereby his office of precursor, and signifying withal, that whatsoever he was, belonged wholly to another, to wit, God, whose instrument he was in speaking. This is a third degree of humility, that when we are constrained to discover some good or perfection that we have, we acknowledge it only as a gift of God, and not as anything of our own.

Consider 2.—"They said to him: Why then dost thou baptize, if thou be not Christ?" The Jews check him, as taking upon him, by his own private authority, an office not belonging unto him. But he contendeth not in his own defence, nor maketh any apology, but referring the matter to God, proceedeth in abasing himself, saying, "I baptize with water; but there hath stood one in the midst of you, whom you know not, etc., the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose." This is a fourth degree of humility, to be backward in one's own excuse. Oh, that we would all practise it.

Consider 3.—The Jews sent the message to John, not to Christ, of whom, notwithstanding, they might have been better informed. So, we often seek comfort from creatures instead of the Creator. Observe, moreover, the blindness of the Jews, who, hearing from John that Christ, whom they sought, conversed among them, notwithstanding made no further inquiry after Him. For your part, be diligent to understand the will of God in all things; and when you have understood it, be as faithful to put it in execution.

FRIDAY.

CHRIST'S BAPTISM.—PART I.

Consider 1.—How Christ, beginning His preaching, goeth first to be baptized, to teach us, that we should begin the

work of God with a clean heart. Therefore, He taketh leave of His mother, who, though she cannot but grieve thereat, for the absence of such a Son, yet, withal, she rejoiceth for the redemption of Israel drawing so near at hand. He taketh a long journey to John—the greater to the less, the Lord to the servant—to be baptized by him as a sinner, among the publicans and soldiers.—Luke iii. 12, 14. Admire this humility of the Son of God, and learn that it is the best preparation towards the undertaking of great things, according to the words of the prophet: "And that which shall be saved of the house of Juda, and which is left, shall take root downward, and shall bear fruit upward."—Isa. xxxvii. 31.

Consider 2.—How John, by divine revelation, knowing our Lord at His coming, modestly refuseth to baptize Him, saying, "I ought to be baptized by Thee, and comest Thou to me?" Think what affections of joy, reverence, and submission, John felt at that time in his heart, seeing the Creator humbling Himself so low, as to receive baptism of His creature. Stir up the like affections in yourself, as often as He comes to you in the Blessed Sacrament.

Consider 3.—Christ's answer: "Suffer it to be so now. For so it becometh us to fulfil all justice." Ponder those words, "all justice;" and learn to omit nothing in the way of virtue, that may benefit yourself or edify your neighbour. Examine yourself whether you do so, and whether you put in practice what you teach others by word of mouth; for, as St. Ambrose saith, "That pastor fulfilleth justice, and makes good by deeds what he teacheth by works."

SATURDAY.

CHRIST'S BAPTISM.—PART II.

Consider 1.—"Jesus being baptized and praying, heaven was opened: and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape as a dove upon Him."—Luke iii. 21. For God is wont to exalt and honour the humble; Christ, therefore, is honoured here: 1. By the opening of the heavens, to signify that by Him the gates of heaven were opened to us. 2. By the coming down of the Holy Ghost, to express the fulness of grace and heavenly gifts, which were in Him, and

were by Him to be derived unto us all. 3. He is proclaimed the beloved Son of God, to whom all creatures ought to give due honour.

Consider 2.—The Holy Ghost appeared in the form of a dove, to show what manner of life ought all they to lead that are baptized. "That every one may understand (saith St. Augustine), if he hath the simple spirit, that is, of truth and sincerity, that he must be like a dove, have peace with his brethren, which the dove's kind kisses do signify; and lastly, to hurt nobody, for the dove hurteth not so much as a fly."—August. Tract. vi. in Joan.

Consider 3.—The heavenly effects of the sacrament of baptism, expressed unto us in Christ's baptism. 1. The opening of the gates of heaven. 2. The revealing of divine mysteries. 3. The remission of sins. 4. The unction of the Holy Ghost. 5. The adoption to be the children of God. Give thanks for such manifold benefits, and being now made the son of God, raise up your thoughts and affections to your heavenly habitation, that lieth open for you. Say with the prophet, "Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly, and be at rest?"—Ps. liv. 7.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the Director of your actions.

"O LORD, direct my way in Thy sight."—Ps. v. 9. Consider 1.—What is read to-day in the gospel: "Master, we have laboured all the night, and have taken nothing."—Luke v. 5. For men live in a great mist, or darkness of ignorance, not knowing what to do, nor what will prove beneficial or hurtful to them; wherefore, they stand in need of a divine light, whereby they may be directed in all things. Whence, King Josaphat said, "As we know not what to do, we can only turn our eyes to Thee."—2 Paral. xx. 12. Neither doth God refuse the office of a director: for it is said of Joseph, "The Lord was with him, and made all that he did to prosper."—Gen. xxxix. 23.

Consider 2.—Christ, as we read in this day's gospel, directed the apostles' fishing, and presently there was taken a great quantity of fish. He will, likewise, come this day into your soul, and direct your fishing, that is, your spiritual affairs; so that you have great reason to hope for much profit, provided that you "loose your net at His word;" that is, follow His directions, and promptly obey His interior inspirations.

Consider 3.—You must prepare your heart against the coming of this your director, and first purge it from all sin. And therefore, St. Peter, in this day's gospel, said, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!" knowing that Christ cannot stand with sin. Secondly, you must make earnest suit unto our Lord, beseeching Him to do you that favour; for of King Ozias it is said, "And as long as he sought the Lord, He directed him in all things."—2 Paral. xxvi. 5. Wherefore, say with the prophet, "Look upon Thy servants, and upon their works; and direct their children. And let the brightness of the Lord our God be upon us; and direct Thou the works of our hands over us; yea, the work of our hands do Thou direct."—Ps. lxxxix. 16, 17.

MONDAY.

CHRIST'S RETIRING INTO THE DESERT, ETC.

Consider 1.—"Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from the Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the desert."—Luke iv. 1. Ponder whether the Holy Spirit doth lead the soul, which it hath once replenished, to wit, to prayer and contemplation of heavenly things. Besides, our Lord retired to avoid the applause of the people, which was likely to follow from those wonderful signs which they had seen in His baptism. He would, before His preaching, make use of these spiritual exercises of forty days, that you might learn to be well affected towards the like, and to perform them with spirit and devotion, in their time, according to the example of our Lord.

Consider 2.—Christ is said, after His baptism, to have followed the conduct of the Holy Ghost, to intimate, that all who are baptized, ought to follow the direction of the Divine Spirit, not their own judgment. Examine yourself

by what spirit you are led in your actions, whether of perfection or of vanity. If you be the son of God, you must in all things be led by His Spirit; for, according to the words of the apostle, "Whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Consider 3.—What St. Mark saith of Christ: "And He was with beasts."—Mark i. 13. Admire the humility of our Lord, who, being the Creator of all, disdained not, for forty days, to keep company with the brute beasts. He might truly say with Job, "I was the brother of dragons, and companion of ostriches."—Job xxx. 29. Be confounded, that you cannot live contentedly, but with those of your own humour. Learn to bear patiently the fellowship of troublesome companions, if you chance to live among them. For, as St. Gregory saith, "Nobody is perfect, that is impatient among ill-neighbours."—Greg. in cap. 30. Job.

TUESDAY.

CHRIST'S FASTING.

Consider 1.—"And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards He was hungry."—Matt. iv. 2. Consider how Christ joined fasting and mortification to His prayer in the desert; for prayer and mortification are as two sisters, helping one another. Prayer quickeneth mortification, and mortification refineth prayer, as fire doth gold. In this manner, therefore, Christ's prayer "goeth up by the desert, as a pillar of smoke of aromatical spices of myrrh, and frankincense."—Cant. iii. 6. Endeavour that yours may ascend in like manner, and remember what the angel said, "Prayer is good with fasting and alms."—Tob. xii. 8.

Consider 2.—Our Lord fasted with that rigour, in the beginning of His preaching, to teach us, that the beginning of a spiritual life, much more of an apostolical one, ought to be taken from subduing our sensual appetite. Hence, the ancient Fathers, as Cassian witnesseth, ordained, that the first spiritual lesson should be of taming the appetite; for he that cannot master these palpable and grosser vices, how will he be able to subdue those that are more subtle and secret? See, therefore, how you are in this point, and

ponder the words of the wise man: "He that loveth good cheer, shall be in want (to wit, spiritual): he that loveth wine, and fat things, shall not be rich."—Prov. xxi. 17.

Consider 3.—The many fruits of fasting, that you may give yourself to it, as far as your health and strength of body will permit. 1. It tameth the rebellion of the flesh. 2. It purifieth the mind, and makes it fit for heavenly contemplation. 3. It appeaseth God's wrath and indignation. 4. It satisfieth for sin. 5. It is meritorious of eternal life. 6. It often obtains likewise temporal blessings. 7. It is the devil's scourge. 8. It is the food and nourishment of all virtue.

WEDNESDAY.

CHRIST'S TEMPTATIONS IN THE DESERT.

Consider 1.—After forty days' fast in the desert our Lord suffered Himself to be tempted by the devil, in point of gluttony, vainglory, ambition, and avarice. 1. That He might learn by His own experience, to have compassion on our infirmities: "For in that, wherein He Himself hath suffered and been tempted, He is able to succour them also that are tempted."—Heb. ii. 18. 2. That, as a good captain, He might instruct us how to fight in this spiritual warfare. Thank Him therefore for so great an example of humility, and say with the prophet: "Blessed be the Lord my God, who teacheth my hands to fight, and my fingers to war."

Consider 2.—Nobody in this life, although he be a saint, is free from temptation. This appeareth by the example of Christ and His saints, insomuch, that the more perfect a man is, the more fiercely he is assaulted by the devil, "who is more pleased (saith St. Hilary) with victory over saints."—St. Hilary. Be not, therefore, troubled, if you find yourself at any time tempted in this or that matter; but as the wise man adviseth: "Son, coming to the service of God," etc., "prepare thy soul for temptation;" knowing that our enemy, though he rageth ever so much, "can overcome none (saith St. Bernard) but such as will themselves."

Consider 3.—Temptations come to us, not only by the

devil, to overthrow us, but also by the Almighty God, to crown us with victory over them: and, therefore, it was He tempted Abraham, and others His friends, as it is said of Tobias: "Because thou wast acceptable to God, it was necessary that temptation should prove thee."—Tob. xii. 13. Hence the apostle admonisheth us to rejoice in our temptations, and to trust in God—James i. 2,—who "is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able: but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it."—1 Cor. x. 13.

THURSDAY.

CHRIST'S FIRST TEMPTATION IN THE DESERT.

Consider 1.—"And the tempter coming, said to Him: If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread."—Matt. iv. 3. He sets upon Christ in the desert, with the same weapons wherewith he overcame Adam in Paradise. And he tempts Him first with gluttony, for that he saw Christ to suffer hunger after His long fast, being desirous also to find out by this miraculous food, whether He were truly the Son of God. See how craftily he sets his batteries against those places which he thinks to be of less strength, like a prudent captain that besiegeth a town; view, therefore, narrowly your walls on every side, and be careful to strengthen yourself chiefly there where you find yourself weakest.

Consider 2.—How five manner of ways we may be tempted and overcome by gluttony. 1. By anticipating due time. 2. By seeking more costly and nice fare. 3. By curiosity in preparing even ordinary meats. 4. By exceeding the just measure. 5. By too much greediness. Examine, therefore, yourself how you are in these points; for, as Blessed Isidore saith, "No man can attain to the perfection of virtue, unless he first master the ravening of his appetite."

Consider 3.—Christ's answer to his temptation: "Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God;" teaching us, that we should not be too solicitous about our corporal food; "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink"—Rom. xiv. 17;—

but much more about spiritual things, whereby we do truly live to eternity. Wherefore, we are not to expect a miracle for meat and drink, but commit those cares to God's ordinary providence, "Who giveth to beasts their food; and to the young ravens that call upon Him."—Ps. cxlvi. 9. Learn hence to cut off all superfluous thoughts and discourses of such things.

FRIDAY.

CHRIST'S SECOND TEMPTATION IN THE DESERT.

Consider 1.—"Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, and set Him upon the pinnacle of the temple," etc.—Matt. iv. 5. For the enemy thought, saith Saint Cyprian, whom he could not prevail with by gluttony, might be overcome by vainglory: therefore he carrieth our Lord by His permission, in the air, and sets Him on the top of the temple of Jerusalem, persuading Him to cast Himself down; to the end, that the men below, astonished with the miracle, should come to know and honour Him. Ponder how subtle and dangerous a temptation this is, as we are naturally covetous of praise and honour; and see whether it doth not insinuate itself also into your actions.

Consider 2.—Those words of the tempter: "Cast Thyself down," etc. So he saith to all that sin, cast yourself down into sin, which is truly a downfall. Nay, he endeavoureth to persuade all men to cast themselves down, that is, to bend their thoughts and cares upon earth and earthly things, and plunge themselves into them. Think how often, and what things they are in particular, that he buzzeth in your ears; and hearken rather to the apostle's advice: "Seek the things that are above; mind the things that are above, and not the things that are upon the earth."

Consider 3.—How resolutely Christ doth reject that miraculous descent, and with it, vainglory, which was to rise from it: "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," teaching us not to expect miracles from God, when we can use human means. Learn, therefore, both to contemn the esteem and praise of the world, and not to seek or expect extraordinary favours, visitations, or illustrations from God; for, as the wise man saith, "Every proud man is an abomination to the Lord."—Prov. xvi. 5.

SATURDAY.

OUR LORD'S THIRD TEMPTATION IN THE DESERT.

Consider 1.—"Again the devil took Him up into a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them," etc.—Matt. iv. 8. This is the third device of the devil, and the most forcible of all others, whereby he overthroweth most men, to wit, the promise of wealth and honours; whence the wise man saith, "Gold and silver hath destroyed many."—Ecclus. viii. 3. But the liar proffered more than he could perform, saying, "All these will I give thee, if falling down thou wilt adore me." In like manner, to them whom he induceth to sin, he promiseth great matters, content, honours, riches, etc., but at the end payeth them only with grief and miseries.

Consider 2.—Christ's constancy; teaching us by His example, not to sin for gaining the whole world: and yet how many are there that run daily to hell but for a small share of it? "Begone, Satan: for it is written: The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve." See whether you serve your Lord God only, or not rather your own inordinate desires, often adoring the devil in them. "For by whom a man is overcome, of the same also he is the slave."—2 Pet. ii. 19.

Consider 3.—After the third repulse, "the devil left Him; and behold angels came and ministered to Him," in reward of His victory. Think with what alacrity those heavenly spirits come, sent by the Eternal Father, and with what reverence they serve their Lord with the meat they bring. So those that serve or help others in mean offices, do hereby truly serve Christ in His little ones. Observe what St. Luke saith, that "all the temptation being ended, the devil departed from Him for a time"—Luke iv. 13;—that you might not think yourself secure, although twice or thrice you should have forced him away. "We have need of great vigilance (saith St. Chrysostom), because we have continual war and no truce."

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as an Offering and a Sacrifice.

"I WILL go into Thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay Thee my vows, which my lips have uttered."—Ps. lxv. 13, 14. Consider 1. What is read this day in the gospel: "If thou offer thy gift at the altar," etc.—Matt. v. 23. The Eucharist is, of all others, the most excellent offering that can be made, wherein the Body and Blood of Christ are offered to God, as a propitiatory sacrifice for the living and the dead. For "Christ hath loved us, and hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odour of sweetness"—Ephes. v. 2,—as the apostle saith. What a treasure, therefore, have we in such a gift, oblation, and sacrifice.

Consider 2.—This divine sacrifice hath three excellencies above all the sacrifices of the old law. 1. In the exterior decorum, as being more seemly and decent, and without effusion of blood. 2. In the interior worth and dignity, for that in others only beasts were offered, in this the Son of God Himself. 3. As to the effects, for this sacrifice hath virtue and efficacy for the good of the living in this world, for freeing the dead out of purgatory, and for the glory of the blessed in heaven.

Consider 3.—For due preparation to offer this sacrifice is required: 1. Singular purity, according to that, "Let him not approach to the altar, because he hath a blemish, and he must not defile My sanctuary."—Lev. xxi. 23. 2. And chiefly, fraternal charity and union, as is intimated in this day's gospel: "If thou offer thy gift, etc., go first to be reconciled to thy brother," etc. This was required in all sacrifices, but is chiefly necessary in the Holy Eucharist, which was principally instituted to unite us altogether as members of the same body under one head; and, therefore, by the Council of Trent it is called "the seal of unity, the bond of charity, the symbol of concord."

MONDAY.

THE APOSTLES' FIRST CALLING.—PART I.

Consider 1.—Christ going about to choose His disciples, by whom He would instruct the whole world, went not to Jerusalem, nor Rome, nor Athens, to make His choice of wise, noble, and rich men, whom, if He had so pleased, He might easily have drawn to Himself, as He did the three sages from the east, but would choose such as were poor, simple, and contemptible in the sight of the world. "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God!"—Rom. xi. 33. What man now-a-days would make such a choice? Christ did it. 1. For the commendation of humility, which was necessary for His disciples. 2. For the manifestation of the divine power, in working great things by weak instruments. "The foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise."—1 Cor. i. 27.

Consider 2.—How even these men were chosen by our Lord, not assembling the people, and publicly selecting His disciples out of that number, for the greater authority of His preaching; but without any noise or stir, and as if He had lighted upon them by chance. So two of John's disciples hearing that commendation from their master's mouth —"Behold the Lamb of God;" and as they were following Christ, He turned to them, and most courteously asked, "What seek you?" and having brought them home with Him, invited them to a further acquaintance. Learn to precede others in courtesy and civility, and to arrange your affairs with little noise and ostentation.

Consider 3.—One of these disciples was St. Andrew, who, being inflamed with the love of God, was desirous presently to set others on fire. Therefore, finding out his brother Peter, bringeth him to Christ, saying, "We have found the Messias." You, also, by God's great mercy, before many of your time, have found out the Messias in the Catholic Church. Do you likewise endeavour, by means suitable to your calling, to bring many others to Him. For, as the wise man saith, "God gave to every one of them commandment concerning his neighbour."—Ecclus. xvii. 12.

TUESDAY.

THE APOSTLES' FIRST CALLING.—PART II.

Consider 1.—"On the following day He would go forth into Galilee, and He findeth Philip," etc.—John i. 43. Many others our Lord found in the way, but Philip after a special manner, and selected him for eternal life, saying, "Follow Me," who presently followed Him. Think how many able and famous men in your country our Lord permitteth to perish in their errors, and hath singled you out of so many thousands, like another Philip, "and He hath made me as a chosen arrow: in His quiver He hath hidden me."—Isa. xlix. 2. See, therefore, you follow our Lord, as Philip did, and do not undervalue so great a benefit.

Consider 2.—"Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith to him," etc. The love of God is not idle, but worketh great things where it is, or else, "if it worketh not (saith St. Gregory), it is not all." So Philip, as soon as he came to know Christ, hastened to bring others to Him. Ponder those words of Christ, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile." Examine yourself whether you be such, walking with a pure intention in the sight of God, for "a heart that goeth two ways shall not have success."—Ecclus. iii. 28.

Consider 3.—Christ told Nathanael what he secretly did under the fig-tree, etc. Whence you may learn that all things lie open to the eyes of God, even those which you do by yourself alone, in the most secret corner of your chamber, and of your heart, and see that you behave yourself worthily in His sight. Ponder also the noble confession of Nathanael: "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel;" and excite yourself to like acts of faith, confession, and reverence.

WEDNESDAY.

THE SECOND CALLING OF ST. PETER AND ST. ANDREW.

Consider 1.—"Jesus walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren," etc.—Matt. iv. 18. The first calling was only to a familiarity, as St. Augustine affirmeth, whence

afterwards they returned to their employment of fishing. The second was to leave all to follow our Lord, and to be His disciples; so a soul is disposed by degrees to perfection. Ponder those words: "Come ye after Me, and I will make ye to be fishers of men." You must follow the footsteps of Christ, if you intend to be a fisher of men.

Consider 2.—What a dignity it is to be a fisher of men. If it be gainful to fish for pearl and precious stones, how much more to fish for, and to gain souls to our Lord, which Himself bought at the price of His own Precious Blood. "Of all divine things (saith St. Denis) the most divine is, to co-operate with God towards the salvation of souls." Think how you may also concur to so glorious an end, according to the state and calling you are of, and fit your spiritual nets for catching this kind of fish for our Lord; that is, use those means which your state of life affordeth for the gaining of souls, prayer, counsel, example, etc.

Consider 3.—"And they immediately leaving their nets, followed Him." Observe their prompt obedience; they neither excuse themselves, nor pretend poverty, etc. Such ought to be your obedience to God and His holy inspirations, and to your superiors, whom you have in place of God, without making any complaints or excuses. Worldly cares and businesses are nets that entangle and hinder us, that we cannot give ourselves freely to God. Therefore, you must leave all, if you will follow Christ, and lead an apostolical life; for "no man can serve two masters."—Matt. vi. 24.

THURSDAY.

ST. JAMES AND ST. JOHN'S CALLING.

Consider 1.—"And going on from thence He saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother," etc.—Matt. iv. 21. Observe how Christ, first of all, calleth two brothers, Peter and Andrew, and next calleth two, James and John, who were also brothers; that upon these, as so many pillars, He might raise His Church, to signify that all His disciples ought to be well grounded in fraternal charity, according to the evangelist, "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have

love one for another."—John xiii. 35. See, therefore, how you are in this point, if you intend an apostolical life.

Consider 2.—Of these it is said, that "they forthwith left their nets and father, and followed Him." Wherefore, those that intend to be apostolical men, must leave not only worldly goods, but even their parents also, for Christ, casting off all human affection towards them, and converting it into a divine one, in making it subordinate to the divine service. Examine yourself and see whether this love to your parents and kindred doth not bear too great a sway in you, and hinder you from greater perfection.

Consider 3.—And ponder how that word "forthwith," was not set down here without mystery. They were mending their nets with their aged father, but as soon as our Lord called them, they left their nets as they were, and objected not their father's old age, but followed Him presently: "for perfect obedience is to leave their things imperfect." Whence the ancient monks, as Cassian witnesseth, would leave even a single letter unfinished, at the sound of the common bell, or other sign. See whether you be so ready to comply with the inspirations of God, the duties of the Church, and appointment of your superiors, or whether you do not rather seek excuses and pretences, contrary to what is required of you.

FRIDAY.

ST. MATTHEW'S CALLING.

Consider 1.—Jesus passing through Galilee, "saw a man sitting in the custom-house," where he received tolls, "and He saith to him: Follow Me."—Matt. ix. 9. Great was the force of this call, which was able to take a man off, that was attached to his riches; and yet, perhaps, the same would not be forcible enough to withdraw you from less impediments. Who would despair of salvation, when he seeth public sinners taken out of a custom-house, and assumed not only to the friendship of God, but even to the highest dignity of apostleship? Most true it is "His tender mercies are over all His works."—Ps. cxliv. 9.

Consider 2.—How Christ afterwards refused not to eat at table with Matthew and other publicans, that so He might gain them: yet the Pharisees murmur at it. Whence

you may learn that there is nothing so holy that is not liable to men's censures; wherefore, if at any time you chance to suffer reprehension or slander when you have done well, remember that the scholar is not to be above his master.

Consider 3.—The mild answer of Christ: "They that are in health need not a physician, but they that are ill;" and, "I am not come to call the just, but sinners." See how Christ professeth Himself a physician. Open, therefore, your wounds and diseases unto Him; for, as Saint Augustine saith, "No disease is incurable to the Omnipotent Physician; only permit yourself to be cured by Him; hinder not His hand; He knoweth what He doth; and be not only content when He striketh you, but also patient when He lanceth."

SATURDAY.

ST. PAUL'S CALLING.

Consider 1.—"And Saul as yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," etc.—Acts ix. 1. Ponder the unspeakable mercy of God. Saul persecuted His Church, and was in a raging fury to destroy it; when our Lord, on the contrary, not seeking revenge, but intending "thoughts of peace"—Jer. xxix. 11,—prevents him, while he is yet contriving his wickedness, and casts him off his horse, to cure his mind, while He graciously calleth upon him, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" That you might learn to reverence Christ in your neighbours, and esteem their injuries, as done to Christ Himself.

Consider 2.—"Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Ponder the admirable resignation of his will. So ought you also to pray, and to offer yourself ready for whatsoever He shall please to do with you; and with much prayer and great fervour, to seek after the Divine will, and resolutely to fulfil, when once you know it.

Consider 3.—"Arise, and go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do." Our Lord, though after a miraculous manner He had prostrated him on the ground, yet would not instruct him Himself, but sent him to Ananias, to learn what He would have him to do; that you might learn to acknowledge and reverence God in your

superiors and spiritual directors. Observe, moreover, how Saul spent three whole days in prayer, without taking either meat or drink, before he had his sight restored; for, fasting and prayer are the best disposition for receiving of spiritual sight. Lastly, until Ananias had imposed his hands upon him, his eyes being opened, he saw nothing, representing thereby the state of a sinner; whence it is said: "Blind the heart of this people; that seeing, they may not see, and hearing, may not understand."—Isa. vi. 10; Luke viii. 10.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider the Eucharist as the Viaticum of our Pilgrimage.

"ARISE, eat; for thou hast yet a great way to go."—3 Kings xix. 7. Consider 1.—What is read in this day's gospel, of Christ's feeding the multitude, lest they should faint in the way: "If I shall send them away fasting to their home, they will faint in the way."—Mark viii. 3. We are all of us on our way to our heavenly country: "While we are in the body, we are absent from the Lord."—2 Cor. v. 6. Wherefore we must have necessary provision for our journey, that we may not fail in the way, and, out of weariness, take up in the stable of this contemptible world, instead of passing on to our heavenly country: therefore, as said that man, "Taste first a little bread, and strengthen thy stomach; and so thou shalt depart."—Judges xix. 5.

Consider 2.—This strengthening bread is properly the Holy Eucharist; which is, therefore, given us under the form of bread and that of wheat, which is most comfortable of all others, thereby to enable us to go on with alacrity, to overcome the toil and labour of the journey, and to resist our spiritual enemies, that strive to hinder our passage. A lively figure of this was that bread which the angel gave to Elias, "in the strength of that food he walked forty days and forty nights, unto the Mount of God, Horeb."—3 Kings xix. 8.

Consider 3.—This bread, although of itself most comfortable and strengthening, produceth not its effects but in

a well-ordered and clean stomach; for, if it be foul, it overchargeth and weakeneth it the more: "Therefore are there many infirm and weak among you"—1 Cor. xi. 30,—saith the apostle, because they received Christ's body unworthily; wherefore, duly prepare your soul, and cleanse it of all inordinate affections; and then this heavenly bread will enable you so as to run cheerfully in the way of God's commandments; according to the psalmist: "I have run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou didst enlarge my heart."—Ps. cxviii. 32.

MONDAY.

THREE THAT OFFERED THEMSELVES TO FOLLOW CHRIST. PART I.

Consider 1.—While Christ was walking by the sea of Tiberias, with multitudes about Him, "a certain scribe came and said to Him: Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou shalt go."—Matt. viii. 19. This was a liberal oblation of himself, but not accepted of; for the holy Fathers are of opinion that this man followed Christ only for gain, as thinking, by His miracles and the concourse of people, that he gathered store of money; or perhaps also, he would follow Him out of vain ostentation, and that he might come to work miracles. Oh! how many are there in the world that say they follow Christ—but, in truth, seek their own ends.

Consider 2.—Christ's answer: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head;" as if He would say, why should you desire to follow Me for worldly wealth, who have no lodging of My own, being less provided than the very beasts and fowls themselves? O wonderful poverty of this Sovereign King! But this poverty is so rich, and of that value, as to be able to purchase the kingdom of heaven, according to the evangelist: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."—Matt. v. 3.

Consider 3.—The disciples of Christ ought not to be either foxes, having their holes, that is coffers, to hoard up treasures in; or birds building their nests aloft, and seeking high and eminent employments and dignities; for that

He Himself is "poor, and in labours from His youth; meek and humble of heart."—Ps. lxxxvii. 16; Matt. xi. 29. Ponder these words: "Though thou be exalted as an eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars; thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord."—Abdias 4.

TUESDAY.

THREE THAT OFFERED THEMSELVES TO FOLLOW CHRIST. PART II.

Consider 1.—Christ "said to another: Follow Me. And he said: Lord, suffer me first to go, and to bury my father."—Luke ix. 59. This was a great mercy of Christ, inviting him to be His disciple, and yet not accepted of, but upon condition; for he would first bury his father, whom he left dying; or, as others expound, would have taken care of him till he died, and after that betake himself to the service of God. So, many would serve God, but after their own fashion; that is, after they had served their own pleasures, and had their swing in the world.

Consider 2.—Our Lord's answer: "Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou, and preach the kingdom of God." He teacheth us to prefer God, before our parents or kindred; He forbids not the performance of our duty, but would have natural affection give way to the divine service; for He will have His disciples to cast off all carnal affection: wherefore, in another place He saith, "If any man come to Me, and hate not his father and mother," etc., "he cannot by My disciple."—Luke xiv. 26.

Consider 3.—Christ termeth them dead, that live to the world in sin; for there are two sorts of death, one of the body, the other of the soul. The body dieth when the soul departeth; the soul dieth when it is separated from God by sin: Christ, therefore, saith, Let them that are dead to God, bury and take care of them that are dead to the world; but let your care rather be to preserve the life of your soul, lest some time or other you come to die by sin, and be cast off from the face of God, more loathsome to Him than any dead carcase: "She that liveth in pleasures (saith the apostle), is dead while she is living."—1 Tim. v. 6.

WEDNESDAY.

THREE THAT OFFERED THEMSELVES TO FOLLOW CHRIST. PART III.

Consider 1.—A third came to Christ, and offered himself to follow Him; but asked leave that he might first return home to dispose of his things, and take leave of his father and friends: "I will follow Thee, Lord, but let me first take my leave of them that are at my house."—Luke ix. 61. A reasonable request in appearance, but not received; for that all dangerous delays in the service of God ought to be carefully avoided: "Delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day."—Ecclus. v. 8.

Consider 2.—Christ's answer: "No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God;" as much as to say, as the ploughman that hath his hand upon the plough, and looketh the contrary way, is not fit to plough; so he that intends to be My disciple, and turneth back to regard worldly affairs, is not fit to preach the gospel. The ploughman must see what is before him; so must the disciple of Christ, according to the apostle: who, "forgetting the things that are behind, and stretching forth himself to those that are before."—Phil. iii. 13.

Consider 3.—We are admonished here of constancy and perseverance in what we undertake for God: "A fool is changed as the moon," but "a holy man continueth in wisdom as the sun"—Ecclus. xxvii. 12;—never going back, but still making progress. Examine yourself, how constant you are in your good purposes; whether you keep the first fervour of your conversion, or as much as you remember yourself to have had at other times, etc. "Be steadfast in the way of the Lord"—Ecclus. v. 12;—and if you find yourself to have grown cold, "do penance, and do the first works."—Apoc. ii. 5.

THURSDAY.

THE CALLING OF THE RICH YOUNG MAN.—PART I.

Consider 1.—As our Lord passed through Judea, "a certain ruler running up and kneeling before Him, asked

Him, Good Master, what shall I do to possess everlasting life?"—Luke xviii. 18; Mark x. 17. Such ought to be your cares and thoughts, to wit, of eternal life, not of this miserable and mortal one, which vanisheth away like a shadow. Therefore, stir yourself up, and often ask yourself that question: "What shall I do to possess everlasting life?"

Consider 2.—Christ's first answer: "Keep the commandments"—Matt. xix. 17,—for this is necessary for all men; neither will it suffice to keep one or more, unless you keep all; for "he that offendeth in one point, is become guilty of all."—James ii. 10. See, therefore, whether you observe every one, and in what manner, which ought to be exact and perfect, according to the psalmist, "Thou hast commanded Thy commandments to be kept most diligently."—Ps. cxviii. 4.

Consider 3.—The young man having answered that he had kept all the commandments of the law from his youth, "Jesus looking on him, loved him, and said to him," etc., "Go, sell whatsoever thou hast," etc., "and come, follow Me"—Mark x. 21;—or, as St. Matthew recounteth, "If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast," etc.—Matt. xix. 21. It is therefore a sign or effect of God's love to a person, when He invites him to renounce all things, and to follow Christ in embracing poverty. Think with yourself what God requireth of you in this point; endeavour, at least, to be poor in affection, that you may the more readily follow Christ, who "being rich He became poor for your sakes; that through His poverty you might be rich."

FRIDAY.

THE CALLING OF THE RICH YOUNG MAN.—PART II.

Consider 1.—"When the young man had heard this word," of selling all he had, "he went away sad; for he had great possessions."—Matt. xix. 22. Thus, we often purpose to do great matters for God, and wish for occasions to suffer for Him, but when we come to the push we fail, and put on a sad countenance. Observe how this young man answered not Christ's call to follow Him, because he was rich; and if God hath from you the like hindrance of

riches, give Him thanks, for that otherwise, perhaps being entangled therewith, and thereby hindered from following Him, you had long since been a lost man.

Consider 2.—That saying of Christ after the young man's departure: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God."—Luke xviii. 24, 25. Wherefore, that you may easily enter, cut off the camel's bunch, that is, at least, all disordinate affection to the riches of this world, and take heed of scraping and hoarding up—"For they that will become rich (saith the apostle), fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil," etc.—1 Tim. vi. 9.

Consider 3.—The saying of St. Peter upon this occasion, "Behold, we have left all things, and have followed Thee." Whence the holy Fathers gather, that the apostles made a vow of poverty, and left all, not only what they had, but also what they might obtain, and even the very desire of having. Ponder the greatness of the reward which our Lord promised to all that should leave anything for His sake; to wit, "they shall receive an hundred times as much, now in this time," etc., "and in the world to come life everlasting."—Mark x. 30. O incomparable purchase! and to be preferred before all the gains in this world!

SATURDAY.

OUR CALLING IN GENERAL TO FOLLOW CHRIST.

Consider 1.—Christ hath prescribed certain laws to be observed by all that come to His school; therefore, as St. Luke saith, He saith to all, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."—Luke ix. 23. These, therefore, are the laws of His school, to wit, abnegation of himself and his desires, carrying the cross, and that daily, and imitation of Christ in all things. See how you are in these particulars, that you may become a worthy disciple of such a master.

Consider 2.—More in particular, what it is properly to deny himself; for it is, as holy men say, to break and leave one's own will, and "to strip himself of the old man with

his deeds."—Colos. iii. 9. Think how necessary this is; and on the contrary, how dangerous a thing it is to follow one's own will and judgment.—St. Bern. serm. 2, de St. Andrea. See how you are in this point, and how you may better yourself in it, to God's glory; and lastly, by what means you may arrive to this abnegation of yourself.—St. Jerome in Matt. xvi.

Consider 3.—To carry our cross daily; the apostle also adviseth us, in those words: "always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus."—2 Cor. iv. 10. Therefore, no day ought to pass with a disciple of Christ without some progress in mortification; whence, St. Augustine saith, "The whole life of a Christian, if he liveth according to the Gospel, is a cross and a martyrdom." Therefore, take up your cross cheerfully, and whatsoever is displeasing to flesh and blood; for, by the cross the way lies open to a crown.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as a Good Tree.

"LET my beloved come into His garden, and eat the fruit of His apple-trees."—Cant. v. 1. Consider 1.—What is read to-day in the Gospel: "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit."—Matt. vii. 17. Christ, above all others, is a good tree, and is often compared to several sorts of trees in Holy Scripture. In the Canticles it is said, "As the apple-tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons."—Cant. ii. 3. Other men are trees of the woods, which bring forth no other than wild and sour fruits, to wit, sin; Christ alone is the apple-tree, bringing forth most delicious fruit; and, as the apple by its juice affordeth both meat and drink, so Christ, by His precious Body and Blood, is both meat and drink to us in the Eucharist.

Consider 2.—Your soul is as a garden planted by God's own hand, according to the words of the prophet: "Their soul shall be as a watered garden."—Jer. xxxi. 12. Into

this garden of yours will be brought to-day and planted this heavenly tree—the true "tree of life, bearing twelve fruits"—Apoc. xxii. 2,—as is said in the Apocalypse, which are "Charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continence, chastity." —Gal. v. 22, 23. O how ought you to long for that hour, in which your "beloved is to come into His garden, and eat the fruit of His apple-trees;" that is, of good works, which He will produce in you!

Consider 3.—If you desire to have your fill of this fruit, you must set yourself down under the shadow of this tree, by an attentive contemplation of its excellency and goodness; for, so it is said of the apple-tree above mentioned: "I sat down under His shadow, whom I desired: and His fruit was sweet to my palate."—Cant. ii. 3. Prepare yourself, therefore, by holy desires; increase your step by prayer, and it will be granted you, "to taste and see that the Lord is sweet."—Ps. xxxiii. 9.

MONDAY.

THE MARRIAGE FEAST IN CANA OF GALILEE.—PART I.

Consider 1.—And there was a marriage made in "Cana of Galilee: and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and His disciples, to the marriage."—John ii. 1. Our most benign Lord refused not to be present at the marriage feast, that He might take occasion to do good to many, and withal confirm His disciples in their faith. Think with what gravity and modesty he behaved Himself at table, and learn to keep moderation on occasions of mirth, according to the psalmist: "Let the just feast and rejoice before God;" that is, as in the sight of God, and having Him contiuually before your eyes.

Consider 2.—The wine failing, His blessed mother, of her own accord, without being asked, is careful to relieve their necessity in requital for their kind invitation, and, therefore, saith to her Son, "They have no wine:" how much more careful will she be in the spiritual necessities of those who are devoted to her? For, by how much the more holy she is than other saints, so much the more solicitous she is of our good, saith St. Augustine. Beseech

her to intercede with her blessed Son also for you; for you are truly in want of the spiritual wine of charity and devotion.

Consider 3.—Christ's answer, which was seemingly harsh: "Woman what is it to Me and to thee? My hour is not yet come." To teach us: first, that we are not to appoint God any set time of helping us, as they did whom Judith reprehendeth, in these words: "You have set a time for the mercy of the Lord, and you have appointed Him a day, according to your pleasure."—Judith viii. 13. Secondly, that in the service of God we must put off all carnal affection; for which occasion Christ is said to have never called the Blessed Virgin by the tender name of mother, even upon the cross; whence, Moses, speaking of the Levites, saith, "He hath said to his father and to his mother: I do not know you; and to his brethren: I know you not," etc. "These have kept Thy word, and observed Thy covenant."—Deut. xxxiii. 9.

TUESDAY.

THE MARRIAGE FEAST IN CANA OF GALILEE.—PART II.

Consider 1.—"His mother saith to the waiters: Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye."—John ii. 5. Admire the wonderful confidence of the Blessed Virgin, who, not discouraged by the seemingly rough answer, encouraged the waiters, as if her request had been granted. Observe that the confidence of obtaining what was asked was grounded on the exact performance of what our Lord should enjoin, according to the words of the evangelist: "If my words abide in you, you shall ask whatever you will, and it shall be done unto you."—John xv. 7. Be sure, therefore, to fulfil whatsoever Almighty God saith unto you, either by Himself or vicars, your superiors and directors, if you desire to be furnished with spiritual wine.

Consider 2.—Christ's injunction, saying, "Fill the waterpots with water." It was wine that they wanted, and yet He biddeth them pour in water, who could, without more ado, have created wine in the vessels as they were, without any water; but God commandeth sometimes things that seem to stand with little reason, to try our obedience. Besides, He will have us to concur in things appertaining to

our own salvation; for, as Saint Augustine saith, "He that made you without you, will not save you without you."

Consider 3.—The perfection of obedience in these waiters: they reply not; they question not anything, nor ask a reason why, but presently fill the vessels, and that "to the brim;" so we ought to perform readily, entirely, and to the full, the commands of God and our superiors. Almighty God would have nothing that was maimed or imperfect offered to Him in sacrifice. See whether your works be such, and have a care it be not said of you, "I find not thy works full before my God."—Apoc. iii. 2.

WEDNESDAY.

THE MARRIAGE FEAST IN CANA OF GALILEE.—PART III.

Consider 1.—The greatness of the miracle. The creature obeyed the will of Christ, and the water was presently turned into wine; which being poured out and tasted by the chief steward, the miracle appeared to the singular joy of the Blessed Virgin, confirmation of the apostles in their faith, and astonishment of all. Observe the force of the Blessed Virgin's intercession, by whose means our Lord wrought His precursor's first sanctification, and this first miracle, that you might learn that all temporal and spiritual blessings are to be derived unto us by her.

Consider 2.—Those words of the chief steward: "Every man at first setteth forth good wine," etc., "and then that which is worse." Even so, the world dealeth with its customers: at first, it presents them with the cup of joys, allurements, and pleasures—"let no meadow escape our riot," —but afterwards it plungeth the soul into vexation, and trouble of mind, and torment; its wine is such as Solomon speaketh of: "It goeth in pleasantly; but in the end, it will bite like a snake, and will spread abroad poison like a basilisk."—Prov. xxiii. 31, 32. "Their grapes" are truly "grapes of gall, and their clusters most bitter."—Deut. xxxii. 32.

Consider 3.—God dealeth otherwise; He keepeth His good wine to the last: at the beginning He afflicteth and chastiseth, but afterwards comforteth and crowneth. "Thou hast shown Thy people hard things; Thou hast made us drink the wine of sorrow."—Ps. lix. 5. But afterwards

"they shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house: and Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure."—Ps. xxxv. 9. Besides, Christ did not bring forth His wine till His entertainer's wine failed, for that spiritual comfort is not afforded but in the absence and contempt of all sensual pleasure. So the manna rained not down till the provision of meal that was brought out of Egypt was spent; and afterwards again, "manna ceased, after they ate of the corn of the land."—Josue v. 12.

THURSDAY.

CASTING THE BUYERS AND SELLERS OUT OF THE TEMPLE. PART I.

Consider 1.—Jesus being entered into the temple, "He found in it them that sold oxen and sheep and doves," etc.—John ii. 14. But though they were sold there for the use of the sacrifices, yet Christ was displeased with worldly traffic in the house of God; that you might learn with what modesty and silence you ought to behave yourself in the church, in the time of divine service; for "holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord (saith David), unto length of days."—Ps. xcii. 5.

Consider 2.—Christ inflamed with zeal for His Father's house. "When He had made as it were a whip of little cords, He drove them all out of the temple, the sheep also and the oxen, and the money of the changers He poured out, and the tables He overthrew." The same He did again afterwards, a little before His passion. The most meek Lamb, when His Father's honour was concerned, put on the lion, fulfilling in Himself that of the prophet: "The zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up"—Ps. lxviii. 10;—with such zeal ought all priests to be inflamed, and with their utmost endeavour to hinder the sins of their neighbours.

Consider 3.—This zeal of the divine glory is most grateful to God: whence He doth reproach some of His prophets in these words: "You have not gone up to face the enemy; nor have you set up a wall for the house of Israel"—Ezech. xiii. 5;—wherefore St. Gregory saith, "No sacrifice is more grateful to God than zeal of souls." True zeal of souls consisteth in this, that whatsoever you see amiss in

others, you endeavour to amend, which if you cannot, to bear with and deplore. See how cold perhaps you are on this behalf, as if like another Cain, you were not your "brother's keeper."—Gen. iv. 9.

FRIDAY.

CASTING THE BUYERS AND SELLERS OUT OF THE TEMPLE. PART II.

Consider 1.—How Christ, casting them out of the temple, saith, "Make not the house of My Father a house of traffic;" and at another time, a little before His Passion, "My house shall be called the house of prayer: but you have made it a den of thieves;" whereby we are taught to observe due reverence, both interior and exterior, in God's church. See whether you make it a house of prayer, or not rather of merchandise, thinking of your affairs, or other trifles.

Consider 2—Your soul is a temple of God, according to that of the apostle, "You are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you;" whence followeth that dreadful sentence, "But if any man violate the temple of God, him shall God destroy."—1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. Consider, therefore, whether it be a house of prayer, by frequently lifting up your mind to God, or rather of worldly negotiation, bending your thoughts upon earthly things, your own temporal concerns, meat, drink, and the like; wherefore cast out from it sheep and oxen, that is, all brutish and earthly affections; even offering violence to yourself, by whips and cords; for, that "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away."—Matt. xi. 12.

Consider 3.—Christ brought not the scourge into the temple, but made it of the cords He found there. So our Lord carrieth not a scourge about Him, but makes one up of our sins, as of so many cords: "The cords of the wicked (saith David) have encompassed me"—Ps. cxviii. 61;—wherefore cast all sin out of the temple of your soul, and you will leave Him nothing to make a scourge of. "Woe to you that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as the rope of a cart:" which those do who add sin to sin; and the longer and more grievous the sin is, the more grievous also will be the scourge.

SATURDAY.

OUR LORD'S DISCOURSE WITH NICODEMUS.

Consider 1.—How Nicodemus—John iii. 1—being a chief man, and well skilled in the law, came to Christ for instruction; but in the night time, and in private, for fear of the Jews, and in regard of his worldly reputation, being ashamed, perhaps, to appear amongst the poor and unlearned disciples. Think how many are hindered from their salvation by these worldly respects, but do you rather say with St. Paul, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel"—Rom. i. 16,—and confess God both confidently and openly; "For he that shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him the Son of Man shall be ashamed when He shall come in His majesty"—Luke ix. 26,—saith the Lord.

Consider 2.—Christ, as a most loving physician, accommodated Himself to the weakness of His disciple, and instructed Him in many things. 1. Concerning baptism. 2. Of the causes of His coming into the world. 3. Of His Passion, that was to ensue. 4. Of faith necessary to salvation. Give God thanks for these; and ponder in particular, the benefit of our spiritual generation by baptism: "You must be born again," etc. Consider also the greatness of that love wherewith "God so loved the world, as to give His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish."

Consider 3.—These words, "The light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than the light." O shameful neglect! Examine yourself, whether in your actions, you rather love darkness than light; "for every one that doth evil, hateth light." See whether you do nothing in private, which you would be ashamed of in public, and hereafter desist from it, "for there is not anything secret, that shall not be made manifest; nor hidden that shall not be known," at least by God, in whose sight continually you are.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as coming to take account of your Stewardship.

"GIVE an account of thy stewardship."—Luke xvi. 2. Consider 1.—What is said this day in the gospel: "There was a certain rich man who had a steward," etc.—Luke xvi. 1. Think that you are this steward whom our Lord had entrusted with several goods, internal, external, natural, supernatural; but with what fruit? It is to be feared, but little yet. Look thoroughly into yourself, and perhaps you will find all out of order. You have slept out your sleep of lukewarmness, and now you find nothing in your hands; and, therefore, you are in disgrace with your Lord, as having squandered away, not your own, who have nothing of yourself, but His goods.

Consider 2.—Our Lord will come unto you to-day, in the Eucharist, to exact an account of the goods He hath entrusted you withal; but at present He will do it favourably, with mercy and commiseration: for, as Job said, "He doth not now bring on His fury: neither doth He revenge wickedness exceedingly."—Job xxxv. 15. He will rather supply your defects, forgive you your debts, and make good unto you again by His holy grace, what you had misspent; hereafter He will come with an "iron rod, to do justice and judgment, and will search you with lamps." Endeavour, therefore, now to please Him, by an exact performance of your duties, seeing you cannot otherwise make Him any recompense.

Consider 3.—These duties are: 1. An humble begging of pardon, according to that, "I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me."—Matt. xviii. 32. 2. Frequent and constant love; "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much."—Luke vii. 17. 3. A perfect forgiveness of offences, and injuries done to you by others; "Forgive, and you shall be forgiven."—Luke vi. 37. With these affections bring your Lord into the closet of your heart, saying with the Psalmist, "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant," but rather, "According to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out my iniquity."

MONDAY.

OUR LORD'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT.—PART I.

Consider 1.—"Seeing the multitude, He went up into a mountain," etc., "and opening His mouth He taught them."—Matt. v. 1. Ponder 1. The place of this famous sermon, which is a high mountain. 2. The preacher's person, which is the uncreated wisdom of God. 3. His chair, or pulpit; for He taught them upon the bare ground. 4. His auditors, which were His disciples, and other unlearned and simple people. 5. The subject of His discourse, which was of true felicity. Go you up in spirit with the people, and sitting at the feet of so great a Master, give attentive ear to what He saith; say with Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."—1 Kings iii. 10.

Consider 2.—Christ, in this His sermon, performed not only the office of a teacher, but also of a law-giver, declaring the ancient law, and proclaiming the new, "It was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill," etc. "But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment," etc., and the like. Reverence, therefore, this your law-giver, and give Him thanks for His wholesome precepts. Beseech Him to print His holy law in the fleshy tables of your heart; say with David, "Set before me for a law the way of Thy justifications, O Lord: and I will always seek after it."—Ps. cxviii. 33.

Consider 3.—He performed also the part of a counsellor, exhorting them to points of the greatest perfection, even beyond the obligation of the law; as of turning the other cheek to the striker; of letting go the cloak also to him that takes away the coat; of going two other miles with him that will force you one mile, and the like. Think how just it is to follow His counsel in all things; for, "in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."—Col. ii. 3. And by Isaias He is styled "Counsellor, and the Angel of great counsel."—Isa. ix. 6.

TUESDAY.

OUR LORD'S SERMON ON THE MOUNT.—PART II.

Consider 1.—All men have a natural desire of felicity, even the most wicked of all would be happy, but will not seek after true happiness; therefore, Christ beginneth with that, which all men desire, as if He should say, you all desire to be happy; therefore I will show you the several ways that lead to true happiness. Do you, therefore, set your affections upon this true felicity, and seek it only by such ways or means, as Christ hath pointed out to you.

Consider 2.—How different are the ways of God from the ways of the world, and His judgments from those of men. The world placeth its felicity in honours, riches, pleasures, eating and drinking, freedom from pain and grief, etc. "They have called the people happy that hath these things."—Ps. cxliii. 15. On the contrary, Christ pronounceth them happy that are poor, meek, and humble, that hunger and thirst after justice, that suffer reproaches and torments, etc. "As the heavens are exalted above the earth, so are My ways exalted above your ways"—Isa. lv. 9,—saith our Lord; see with what party you side, with Christ, or with the world.

Consider 3.—Eight virtues contemptible to the world, Christ honoured with the title of beatitudes, and of them as so many steps, made a ladder for us to climb up to our ultimate and everlasting felicity. These are: 1. Poverty of spirit. 2. Meekness. 3. Sorrow for sins. 4. Hunger and thirst after justice. 5. Mercy. 6. Purity of heart. 7. Making of peace, both with God and with men. 8. Suffering persecution for Christ. You must also climb this ladder, if you desire to enter into the joy of our Lord: "Blessed is the man whose help is from Thee: in his heart he hath disposed to ascend by steps."—Ps. lxxxiii. 6.

WEDNESDAY.

THE FIRST BEATITUDE.

"Blessed are the Poor in Spirit."

Consider 1.—More in particular each virtue, and in them: 1. Their acts. 2. Christ's example. 3. Their reward. The proper acts of poverty are counted five. 1. He is poor in spirit, who, in affection, is ready rather to lose all, than offend God. 2. Who actually leaveth all for His sake. 3. Who aspireth not to things above himself, presumeth not of himself, nor seeketh the praises of men. 4. Who denieth his own judgment and will, submitting himself to others. 5. Who acknowledgeth whatsoever he hath, as a gift of God, and rightly understandeth his own nothingness; "My substance is as nothing before Thee."—Ps. xxxviii. 6. See how you are in each point.

Consider 2.—The admirable examples which Christ gave us in this kind throughout His whole life; but chiefly in the crib, in banishment, in His parents' house, and on the cross; besides, "He emptied Himself"—Phil. ii. 7,—as the apostle saith, made subject and obedient, not only to His Eternal Father and parents on earth, till the thirtieth year of His age, but also to His tormentors, even to death itself; and of His doctrine He publicly professed: "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent Me."—John vii. 16.

Consider 3.—The reward of this poverty: "For theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Think what a gainful kind of merchandise this is, to get an everlasting kingdom, by the exchange of some few transitory enjoyments of this life. Ponder the excellence of this kingdom, its riches, glory, beauty, and perpetuity: "That eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him."—1 Cor. ii. 9. Wherefore, St. Gregory Nazianzen had reason to say: "Happy he that buyeth Christ, though with all his goods and fortune."

THURSDAY.

THE SECOND BEATITUDE.

"Blessed are the Meek," etc.

Consider 1.—After poverty in spirit, that is, contempt of the world, and its desires, followeth meekness, as the child its parent. The acts of this virtue are chiefly three: the first is to bridle the passions of anger and revenge; and when zeal is to be shown, to do it without any perturbation, either interior or exterior. The second is to be affable to all, and troublesome to none, neither in word nor in action. Third, not to oppose, or put off injuries with violence, even when you lawfully may, but to suffer your own contempt, with peace and tranquillity of mind. Think how you are in these particulars.

Consider 2.—Christ's example herein, of whom Isaias saith: "He shall not contend, nor cry out, neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets. The bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not extinguish," etc. "He shall not be sad nor troublesome." —Matt. xii. 19, 20; Isaias xlii. 2, 3, 4. And St. Peter: "Who, when He was reviled, did not revile; when He suffered, He threatened not: but delivered Himself to him that judged Him unjustly"—1 Pet. ii. 23;—and of Himself He saith: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart."—Matt. xi. 29. Think how you may imitate the same.

Consider 3.—The reward: "For they shall possess the land;" to wit, of their own heart, being masters of their own passions; and also of the hearts of others, according to the words of the wise man: "Son, do thy works in meekness, and thou shalt be beloved above the glory of men."—Ecclus. iii. 19. Lastly, they shall possess the land of promise and everlasting inheritance: "The meek shall inherit the land, and shall delight in abundance of peace." —Ps. xxxv. 11. Procure, therefore, to have this meekness in your life and conversation, that you may come also to be delighted in multitude of peace, as well with God as with yourself, and with all the world.

FRIDAY.

THE THIRD BEATITUDE.

"*Blessed are they that Mourn,*" *etc.*

Consider 1.—This mourning is threefold: 1. Of compunction for our own sins, according to the example of David and St. Peter. 2. Of compassion for others. 3. Of devotion for our banishment in this world, our separation from God, and our longing desire after Him. "Woe is me, that my sojourning is prolonged!"—Ps. cxix. 5. This spiritual mourning doth not wholly consist in afflicting the mind, but also in refusing such things as bring pleasure and delight with them. Whence the wise man saith: "Laughter I counted error: and to mirth I said: Why art thou vainly deceived?"—Eccles. ii. 2. Think, on the contrary, how greedily you seek after your own content and satisfaction in all things, and, perhaps, also "rejoice in most wicked things."—Prov. ii. 14.

Consider 2.—The example of Christ our Lord, of whom St. Chrysostom writeth: "You will often find Christ weeping, but never laughing." And Solomon saith: "The heart of the wise is where there is mourning, and the heart of fools where there is mirth."—Eccles. vii. 5. Think, therefore, how reasonable it is you should imitate the example of so great a master, and rank yourself with wise men, rather than with fools.

Consider 3.—The reward: "For they shall be comforted," both in this life, with divine illustrations, and with the testimony of a good conscience; but to the full in the life to come, where "they shall be inebriated with the plenty of God's house, and be made to drink of the torrent of His pleasure."—Ps. xxxv. 9. Wherefore lament your own and your neighbour's sins; for "those that sow in tears, shall reap in joy." On the contrary, "Woe to you that now laugh: for you shall mourn and weep."—Luke vi. 25. And in the Apocalypse it is said: "As much as she hath glorified herself, and lived in delicacies, so much torment and sorrow give ye to her."—Apoc. xviii. 7.

SATURDAY.

THE FOURTH BEATITUDE.

"*Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after Justice,*" *etc.*

Consider 1.—To hunger and thirst after justice, hath these proper acts: the first is, to desire all things, without exception, to be fulfilled, which are of justice, and obligation towards God and our neighbour. The second, to desire more and more our progress in virtue. The third, that this same justice should be in all the world, and that all may obtain and preserve it. The fourth, to hunger after Christ our Lord, who is our "justice and sanctification"—1 Cor. i. 30—(as the apostle witnesseth) both sacramentally and spiritually, by a lively faith and interior desire. Think how you are in these points, and whether you do not rather loathe these, and thirst only after worldly delights.

Consider 2.—The example of Christ, who, all His lifetime, sought after nothing else than to do the will of His Father, according to the words of the evangelist: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me."—John iv. 34. And hanging upon the cross, He said, "I thirst"—John xix. 28;—to wit, for the salvation of mankind, for whom He had shed His blood. Such ought to be your hunger and thirst; not that of the wicked, that serves their appetites.

Consider 3.—The reward: "For they shall have their fill." God affording them special graces, and spiritual comfort in this life, and replenishing them to the full, with the clear vision of Himself in the future, according to the words of the psalmist: "I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear."—Ps. xvi. 15. Think how much this heavenly plenitude is to be wished for, which never cloyeth, though it lasted for all eternity. See whether you had rather have your fill in this life, or in the next; it will not be afforded in both—in one you must suffer hunger.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as a Merciful Lord.

"HEAR me, O Lord, for Thy mercy is kind."—Ps. lxviii. 17. Consider 1.—What is read to-day in the gospel, how Christ wept over Jerusalem—Luke xix. 41;—for God is very sensible of our miseries, and compassionate; and is therefore called by the apostle, "the Father of Mercies"—2 Cor. i. 3, etc;—and often "the merciful and pitiful Lord:" for the apostle saith (speaking of Christ) that "we have not a high priest, who cannot have compassion on our infirmities"—Heb. iv. 15;—wherefore you may justly comfort yourself in this, that this same merciful Lord will come to-day into your soul, to pour out the riches of His mercy upon her.

Consider 2.—The mercy of God towards men never showed itself more in any work than in the Eucharist: therefore David cried out, "He hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works, being a merciful and gracious Lord: He hath given food to them that fear Him."—Ps. cx. 4, 5. Think what a mercy this is, to feed us with His own flesh, and make us drink of His blood; who ever did so much for His greatest friend? Lay open, therefore, confidently, the miseries of your soul, when He cometh to you, and beseech Him to afford redress.

Consider 3.—You must have great care when He comes unto you, that you give Him not occasion of weeping over you, as He did over Jerusalem, "Because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation." He doth often visit us by holy inspirations, by good books, etc., and thereby incites us to perfection. See how you correspond, lest there may be the same reason to say of you: "For the days shall come upon thee, and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee around, etc., and (by sin) beat thee flat to the ground."

MONDAY.

THE FIFTH BEATITUDE.

"Blessed are the Merciful," etc.

Consider 1.—Mercy comprehendeth fourteen sorts of actions which are called works of mercy, seven spiritual and seven corporal. The acts of this virtue, that they may be perfect, must—1. Extend themselves to all, without exception, even our enemy. 2. Lay hold on all occasions of doing good, and that in all manner of distress, according to our ability. 3. They ought to be performed with an interior pious affection. Think how you are wont to be in these, especially thy spiritual works of mercy.

Consider 2.—The example of Christ in these particulars: 1. As to all sorts of persons; therefore, He said: "Come to me all," without exception, "that labour, and are burdened, and I will refresh you."—Matthew xi. 28. 2. As to all occasions of doing good, therefore, "He was teaching daily in the temple."—Luke xix. 47. And "He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil."—Acts x. 38. 3. He performed all with a most tender affection, like the Samaritan who bound the wounds of him that fell among robbers—therefore "go, and do thou in like manner."—Luke x. 30, etc.

Consider 3.—The reward: "for they shall obtain mercy," as well in this life, both for body and soul, as in the life to come, likewise for both, and that after a perfect manner; and indeed with the same measure that "you shall mete withal, it shall be measured to you again."—Luke vi. 38. Think how much you stand in need of God's mercy; what would become of you, if He should deal with you accordiug to your deserts. Be merciful, therefore, and that in all the works of mercy, that you may obtain mercy. "Judgment without mercy to him (saith St. James) that hath not done mercy."—James ii. 13.

TUESDAY.

THE SIXTH BEATITUDE.

"Blessed are the Clean of Heart," etc.

Consider 1.—Cleanness of heart consisteth, 1. In being free from all sin, both mortal and venial. 2. In the frequent exercise of holy thoughts. 3. In the purity of a right intention, doing nothing with dissimulation, or with intention to appear before men. Therefore, the apostle requireth of us, charity from a pure heart, and a good conscience, and an unfeigned faith.—2 Tim. i. Examine yourself how you are in these particulars.

Consider 2.—Christ's example: "Who (as St. Peter saith) did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth"—1 Pet. ii. 22;—therefore, He is also called, "The brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty, and the image of His goodness."—Wisd. vii. 26. And did often rebuke the Scribes and Pharisees, "Woe to you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites: because you make clean the outside of the cup and of the dish: but within you are full of rapine and uncleanness."—Matt. xiii. 25. See whether you imitate Christ, or rather the Pharisees, in your actions.

Consider 3.—The reward: "For they shall see God." Oh! what a happiness it will be to see God: "Neither eye hath seen, nor ear heard," etc. Labour, therefore, to obtain this purity of heart; which, the greater it is, the more perfect will be your vision and essential happiness. Even in this life, such shall have a clearer knowledge of God and divine things. On the contrary, "Wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins. For the Holy Spirit of discipline will flee from the deceitful."—Wisd. i. 4, 5.

WEDNESDAY.

THE SEVENTH BEATITUDE.

"Blessed are the Peacemakers," etc.

Consider 1.—There are four several ways of making peace. The first is to make peace with one's-self, by subjecting the flesh to the spirit, and the sensual appetite to reason. The second is to keep peace with others, to hurt none, to give nobody occasion of complaint. The third is, to pacify and make agree those that are at variance. The fourth and most excellent of all others, is to reconcile souls to God. Think how you carry yourself in these.

Consider 2.—The example of Christ, who, therefore came down from heaven, that He might be our Mediator for peace, and is, therefore called "the Prince of peace." At His first entrance into the world, He brought peace with Him: "And on earth peace to men of good will."—Luke ii. 14. And at His going forth of it again, He left us His peace as a legacy, saying, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you," etc.—John xiv. 27. Lastly, He would have His disciples to salute all with the word of peace: "Peace be to this house."—Luke x. 5. And Himself, after His resurrection, used the like salutation to them.

Consider 3.—The reward: "For they shall be called the children of God." Think what a dignity it is to be the son of Almighty God. If it be thought a great matter to be the son of some earthly prince, how much more to have the heavenly King and Lord of all, for his Father! Wherefore, Almighty God doth, after a special manner, love, cherish, and protect these peacemakers, as His own children. See how you keep peace with yourself, with God, and with your neighbour; and do your utmost that "the peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus."—Phil. iv. 7.

THURSDAY

THE EIGHTH BEATITUDE.

"Blessed are they that suffer Persecution," etc.

Consider 1.—These four things: 1. Under the name of persecution are comprehended all manner of injuries, afflictions, and inconveniences, in our fortunes, honour, and life. 2. These are raised by the devil or his ministers, sometimes also through mistake (God so permitting) by the just. 3. They are inflicted for justice sake, when one suffereth them for the exercise of virtue, and in compliance with his proper duties, both towards God and man. 4. In such occasions they are to be suffered, not only patiently but also joyfully, for the greatness of the reward. Therefore St. Peter saith, "Let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a railer, etc. But if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this name."—1 Pet. iv. 15, 16.

Consider 2.—The example of Christ, who endured all manner of injuries and inconveniences, in His honour, in His goods, in His person, for a cause which, on His part, was the most just that could be, to wit, for the publishing His most wholesome and divine law, and bringing mankind back from the depth of vice, whereunto he had fallen, to the way of eternal salvation. Therefore, "look and make it according to the pattern."—Exod. xxv. 40.

Consider 3.—The reward: "For theirs is the kingdom of heaven."—And again, "Be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven." Ponder well the greatness of this reward, and how true are the words of the apostle: "The sufferings of this time are not worthy to be compared with the glory to come, that shall be revealed in us."—Rom. viii. 18.

FRIDAY.

THOSE WORDS OF OUR LORD:

"You are the Salt of the Earth."

Consider 1.—Salt doth both season meat, and keep it from corruption; so it is the part of all apostolical men to

preserve souls from the corruption of sin; and, besides, to render the exercise of virtue savoury and pleasant unto them. If it be your lot to serve God in the nature of salt, see that you be first thoroughly refined and purged from worldly affections, by the fire of divine charity that you may be such yourself as you desire to make others.

Consider 2.—How excellently Christ performed this proper effect of salt, who, to purge and preserve us from sin, spent Himself wholly upon us, in a manner melting away like salt; and communicated to our actions, of themselves insipid and of no worth, the divine savour and value of His precious merits. Moreover, by His example and doctrine, He hath made persecutions, which are bitter of themselves, sweet and pleasant unto us. Permit yourself, therefore, to be seasoned with the salt of His wisdom and example: "Whatsoever sacrifice thou offerest, thou shalt season it with salt"—Lev. ii. 13,—saith our Lord; that is, with the merits and example of Christ.

Consider 3.—"But if the salt lose its savour, etc., it is good for nothing any more but to be cast out, and to be trodden on by men."—Matt. v. 13. In the same manner will God use those preachers that have no virtue or efficacy, either of example or doctrine, to season the life and manners of others, but vanish and moulder away by pride, vainglory, and affection to worldly things. "They became vain in their thoughts (saith the apostle), and their foolish heart was darkened."—Rom. i. 21. See that you do not at any time come to this pass.

SATURDAY.

OF THOSE WORDS OF CHRIST:

"*You are the Light of the World,*" etc.

Consider 1.—Apostolical men are to be, not only salt to purge the hearts of men from sin, but also the light of the world, to enlighten others and direct them in the way of all virtue. This is a divine office, and most acceptable to God, according to the prophet: "They that are learned shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that instruct many to justice, as stars for all eternity."—

Dan. xii. 3. It is the property of light both to enlighten and to give heat. See, therefore, how you do already, or may hereafter perform both.

Consider 2.—How Christ was "the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world"—John i. 9,—by word and example, and by the interior rays of His grace. Besides, ponder how light, although it pass through unclean places, is nothing defiled thereby. So Christ, and all apostolical men, although they converse and deal with sinners, yet partake not with them in their sins.

Consider 3.—These words of Christ: "Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel." Where also those are reprehended who employ not themselves in enlightening their neighbour, according to the talent they have received, but rather hide their light in their bosom, either out of pusillanimity or sluggishness. Do you rather, according to the charge God hath committed unto you, be careful to shine forth to all, like unto the stars of which Baruch speaketh: "They were called, and they said: Here we are: and with cheerfulness they have shined forth to Him that made them."—Baruch iii. 35.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as our Propitiation.

"For with Thee there is merciful forgiveness: and by reason of Thy law, I have waited for Thee, O Lord."—Ps. cxxix. 4. Consider 1.—That you are that publican of whom it is read to-day in the gospel: for, by reason of your many sins, you deserve not to lift up your eyes to cry out continually with Him, "O God, be merciful to me a sinner!"—Luke xviii. 13. Call to mind the sins of your past life, and you will see how fitly that saying agreeth with you.

Consider 2.—You have cause of great confidence, in regard that, after so many sins, you have the Judge's Son to stand for you; and more than that, have the Judge Himself,

Christ our Lord, your propitiator. For, "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world."—1 John ii. 2. And although He be always and everywhere merciful, yet, never more than in the Holy Eucharist, where, that He might be propitious unto us, He would even be incorporated with us. That which covered the ark of the covenant in the old law, was called the "propitiatory"—Exod. xxv. 20;—much more, therefore, is the Eucharist our propitiatory, having under it the living ark of the true covenant between God and us.

Consider 3.—The Jews were forbidden to do any servile work on the day of propitiation: "You shall do no servile work in the time of this day, because it is a day of propitiation."—Lev. xxiii. 28. Sin is properly a servile work: "Amen, amen, I say unto you: that whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin"—John viii. 34,—saith our Lord. Abstain, therefore, from sin, even the least, especially upon days of communion; and, with the prophet, say to our Lord, when He cometh: "For Thy name's sake, O Lord, Thou wilt pardon my sin: for it is great."—Ps. xxiv. 11.

MONDAY.

OUR LORD'S PRAYER.—PART I.

Consider how Christ on the mount, like a great master of a spiritual life, among other things taught His disciples also the manner of prayer; which, because we use daily, to the end we may do it with the greater fruit and spiritual feeling, it will be to good purpose to consider each word apart.

"Our Father who art in heaven."—Matt. vi. 9. In the Old Testament, God was ordinarily called the Lord; in the New, He is pleased to be called Father, and that by His own vassals. He is Father: 1. By title of creation. 2. Of conversation. 3. Of adoption. See, therefore, that you prove a child worthy of such a Father. Besides, it is said, "our," not "mine" alone, that you should understand that all men are your brethren, and to be loved by you as such. "Who art in heaven," as in the seat of majesty, though He is everywhere by His presence, that you should raise your

thoughts thither, as to your native country, flowing with all manner of riches and delights.

"Hallowed be Thy name." This is that which we ought to seek in the first place, to wit, the honour and glory of God, that He may be worshipped and loved of all, and honoured by the sanctity of our lives. Therefore, stir up often these affections in yourself: say with the Seraphim, "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of Hosts"—Isa. vi. 3,—and with David, "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Thy name give glory."—Ps. cxiii. 1.

"Thy kingdom come." That is, let Thy kingdom come to us in this life by grace, in the other by glory, for God doth truly reign in the just by grace, according to the Apocalypse: "Thou hast made us to our God a kingdom."—Apoc. v. 10. See whether God, or not rather the world, reigneth in your heart and affection.

TUESDAY.

OUR LORD'S PRAYER.—PART II.

Consider the rest of the prayer. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."—Matt. vi. 9. The will of God is of three sorts—of precept, of counsel, and of good pleasure. Let all, therefore, follow your counsels and inspirations, obey your commands, approve and reverence your good pleasure on earth, as the saints do in heaven, and execute your holy will readily, cheerfully, and constantly. See whether you do this.

"Our daily bread," etc. Both corporal, whereby the life of the body is maintained, and chiefly spiritual, whereby the soul is preserved in life; "Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God."—Matt. iv. 4, etc. "Give us this day," that is, daily; that you should daily ask it, not for yourself alone, but for us all, even your enemies.

"And forgive us our trespasses, as we," etc. Therefore, first forgive, if any one have offended you, either by word or deed, that you may deserve to have forgiveness of your offences. You are indebted more than a thousand talents to God, in comparison whereof your brother scarce oweth you a penny; forgive, therefore, the less debt, that your

greater may be forgiven you: "Forgive, and you shall be forgiven."—Luke vi. 37.

"And lead us not into temptation." That is, do not permit us to be overcome. It is not always expedient for us to be without temptation in this life, for the trial and improvement of our virtue. Beg, therefore, strength to resist.

"But deliver us from evil," both of guilt and of punishment, from the snares of the devil. Lastly, from all evil, past, present, and future, that you may enjoy everlasting happiness in the kingdom of heaven. Amen.

WEDNESDAY.

OTHER SAYINGS OF CHRIST ON THE MOUNT.

Consider 1.—In the same sermon—Matt. v.—our Lord doth very severely forbid anger against brethren. There are three degrees of anger: the first, of the heart; the second, of words; the third, of deeds. Ponder the evils which it brings on us. It perverteth reason; it exposeth us to grievous sins, and makes us liable to the torments of hell. Think how you are subject to this vice in your actions, and see you correct yourself.

Consider 2.—He doth also forbid us to swear: "Let your speech be yea, yea; no, no."—Matt. v. 37. Think how detestable is the custom of swearing, how unworthy of any Christian, much more of sacred persons: "A man that sweareth much, shall be filled with iniquity; and a scourge shall not depart from his house"—Ecclus. xxiii. 12;—that is God's revenge. See whether, perhaps, any such custom have place in you, and seek to root it out, both in yourself and others.

Consider 3.—Those words: "Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them."—Matt. vi. 1. He teacheth us to fly vainglory, arising from good works, otherwise we shall have no reward in heaven. We are to do good works before men, according to that, "So let your light shine before men," etc.—Matt. v. 16,—yet, not with intention thereby to please men, but God alone. "Therefore, let the action (saith St. Gregory) be so in public, that the intention, whereby we seek to please God, be kept in private."

THURSDAY.

SENDING THE APOSTLES TO PREACH.—PART I.

Consider 1.—Our most merciful Lord beholding the state of souls in Israel, said, "The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send labourers into His harvest."—Luke x. 2. Our Lord's harvest are the elect, who expect the preaching of the Gospel; and of these there are many of your own country, for whose good you ought to be concerned. Beseech our Lord, therefore, to send zealous workmen, and such as may reap much fruit, and if it be your lot to be one, see you spare no pains or labour, seeking the good of souls, not your own private ends.

Consider 2.—Hence Christ sent His disciples to preach. But "two and two"—Luke x. 1,—to recommend charity unto us, wherewith the preachers of the Gospel ought to be linked together; for, "A brother that is helped by his brother is like a strong city."—Prov. xviii. 19. Think how necessary this union and mutual assistance is among all that help souls, lest otherwise what one gathers another scattereth; and what one builds another destroyeth. Excite yourself, therefore, to an universal and apostolical charity towards all. Note also, that these harvest-men must be sent, or called by Christ and His substitutes, and not thrust themselves in by their own private authority.

Consider 3.—Christ's precepts to those He was to send. 1. He debarreth them far from all avarice. "Freely have you received, freely give."—Matt. x. 8. 2. He forbiddeth superfluous and precious things. "Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses." 3. In ordinary conveniences He prohibiteth such as are less necessary. "Nor scrip for your journey, nor two coats," etc. 4. Even in necessaries, He will have them confide in God, and feed upon what is set before them, without seeking after extraordinaries and particularities, "Eating and drinking such things as they have."—Luke x. 7. Think how you ought to observe these things, if you desire to labour in our Lord's harvest with profit rather than with pomp.

FRIDAY.

SENDING THE APOSTLES TO PREACH.—PART II.

Consider 1.—These words: "Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves."—Matt. x. 16; Luke x. 3. An unheard of kind of warfare, He sendeth sheep to combat with wolves. So true it is, "The foolish things of the world hath God chosen, that He may confound the wise."—1 Cor. i. 27. Moreover, He admonisheth His preachers to be like sheep, that is meek, not returning evil for evil, but employing themselves wholly to the benefit of their neighbour, like unto sheep which give their wool, and flesh, and all they have, for man's use.

Consider 2.—Those other words: "Be ye wise as serpents, and simple as doves." He would have the serpent's wisdom joined with the dove's simplicity; He requireth prudence in taking fit occasions of time, place, etc., to help our neighbour. Simplicity in doing all things sincerely, without double dealing or malice, and proceeding without bitterness and gall, which doves are said not to have: "Thine eyes are as those of doves"—Cant. i. 14,—saith the spouse in the Canticles, that is pure. Such, therefore, ought to be the eye of your intention.

Consider 3.—The subject they are enjoined to preach on: "Going preach, saying: The kingdom of heaven is at hand," etc.—Matt. x. 7. "And going forth they preached that men should do penance."—Mark vi. 12. They preached not of vain and curious matters, but of such only as were profitable for the good of souls. Such ought to be the endeavours and manner of preaching of those that have the care of souls, speaking inwardly, to their hearers, spiritual profit, and not to the outward show. "Let your applause (saith St. Jerome) be your auditors' tears."

SATURDAY.

THE DISCIPLES RETURN FROM PREACHING.

Consider 1.—How the disciples, being returned from preaching, and something touched with vainglory, as the holy Fathers expound, for having cast out devils, said,

"Lord, the devils also are subject to us."—Luke x. 17. Whence you may see how subtle a vice vainglory is, that insinuates itself even into the actions of the apostles, that you may so much the more beware of it yourself.

Consider 2.—Christ's reprehension, "I saw Satan like lightning falling from heaven;" as if He should say, as Satan in the beginning fell down as lightning from heaven, for his haughtiness and pride, so do you take heed, lest, being puffed up with vainglory, you come to be involved in the same ruin; that you may learn always to stand in fear, and that no state or condition whatsoever, even of apostles or angels, is secure from falling.

Consider 3.—"Rejoice not in this, that spirits are subject unto you: but rejoice in this, that your names are written in heaven." True joy is found only in solid virtue, and hopes of eternal life, not in special favours, or miraculous gifts, which ought rather to cause in us fear and caution lest we abuse them. Learn, therefore, to seek contentment of mind only in heavenly things; the joys of this world are but vain and counterfeited; "the joy of the hypocrite," that is, of the deceitful world, "is but for a moment"—Job xx. 5, —saith Job. Heavenly contentment alone is everlasting, according to the prophet, "Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness: and sorrow and mourning shall flee away."—Isa. xxxv. 10.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as restoring Hearing and Speech to your Soul.

"O LORD, Thou wilt open my lips: and my mouth shall declare Thy praises"—Ps. l. 17. Consider 1.—What is read this day in the gospel, how Christ cured one that was deaf and dumb.—Mark vii. 37. Imagine yourself to be such, as truly you are in spirit: think how deaf you are to God's voice and inspirations, often exciting you to compunction, patience, humility, and all manner of perfection: "I called, and you did not answer: I spoke, and you did not hear."—

Isa. lxv. 12. Think also how dumb you are in speaking of God, and divine matters, whereas much fruit might come of such holy discourses, both to yourself and others. You may truly say with the prophet, "I cannot speak, for I am a child"—Jer. i. 6,—in matters of spirit.

Consider 2.—Christ will come to you to-day in the Eucharist, of whom it is said in the Gospel: "He hath made both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak"—Mark vii. 37;—and if He did it then corporally, much more will He do it now spiritually opening the ear of your heart, so as to hear His voice: and informing your tongue to speak of Him to the edification of others, according to the prophet, "The Lord hath given me a learned tongue, that I should know how to uphold by word him that is weary," etc. "In the morning He wakeneth my ear, that I may hear Him as a master," etc.—Isa. l. 4. O what a happiness!

Consider 3.—The preparation necessary for the receiving of these blessings is:—1. Frequent prayer; for the disciples to-day "besought Him, that He would lay His hand upon him." 2. Retiredness from the noise and affairs of the world; for He cured him not till He had "taken him from the multitude apart." 3. Humility, "for wisdom opened the mouth of the dumb, and made the tongues of infants eloquent."—Wisd. x. 21. Be, therefore, an infant without deceit, and a little one in your own eyes, that you may deserve of our Lord to be made eloquent, to His glory.

MONDAY.

ST. JOHN'S MESSAGE TO CHRIST.—PART I.

Consider 1.—"When John had heard in prison the works of Christ," etc. Ponder the admirable courage of this holy precursor, who did not hesitate publicly to reprehend the impious marriage of the wicked king, and chose rather to endure the hardship of prison, and suffer death itself, than dissemble the truth, much less to betray it. Such ought to be all apostolical men, full of zeal in God's cause, constant upholders of the right, and such as know not how to yield either to threats or flatteries.

Consider 2.—John being in prison, sent two of his

disciples to demand of Christ, "Art Thou He that art to come?" etc. Not, as if he anything doubted of it himself, but to the end that the hearts of his disciples might be confirmed in their faith, by their discourse with Christ; so charity seeketh all means of helping others. Do you rejoice, and give thanks, that Christ hath been pleased long since to come among us, and not hold the world in longer suspense and expectation of His coming, and for the infinite benefits and treasures we enjoy, by means of His incarnation.

Consider 3.—Christ's answer: "Go and relate to John what you have heard and seen: the blind see," etc. He doth not, in open terms, say, that He is Christ, to avoid even the least show of boasting, but proveth it by His works; for as St. Bernard saith: "Louder is the sound of works than of words." In like manner, therefore, you must show yourself to be a Christian, priest, or religious, more by your works than by your words. "Let her works (saith the wise man) praise her in the gates."—Prov. xxxi. 31. Besides, seeing Christ so liberally bestowing corporal benefits—making the blind to see, the lame to walk, and the like; you have much more reason to hope for spiritual gifts and favours at His hands.

TUESDAY.

ST. JOHN'S MESSAGE TO CHRIST.—PART II.

Consider 1.—St. John's disciples being gone, our Lord began to commend their master—Matt. xi. 7:—first, for his constancy in virtue, that he was not like a reed, tossed with every wind, and wavering on every side, nor empty, or void of pith and substance. "He was not a reed (saith St. Gregory), whom no alteration of things did ever make to bend." See whether you be not a reed easily turned on every side, by the least blast of men's mouths, inconstant in your good urposes, and without any pith of solid virtue.

Consider 2.—He is commended for the austerity of his life, and that he was not "clothed in soft garments," etc., that you might learn to shun all niceties and superfluities in meat, drink, and apparel, if you desire to be approved of by Christ in the day of judgment. Lastly, he is termed by Christ, an angel, to wit, both by office and purity of life,

that you should do your utmost to imitate his angelical behaviour, and incomparable innocency of life.

Consider 3.—Upon this occasion Christ said, "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away." Think how true that was in St. John, in the martyrs, and in all the saints. There are two sorts of violence, the one exterior, which curbs the flesh, the other interior, which bridleth the inordinate appetites of the mind, whereof this latter is the more excellent, but both to be used; wherefore, St. Jerome with good reason did say: "So much shall you profit, by how much you offer violence to yourself." See what, and how much it is, that you do in this point.

WEDNESDAY.

THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST.

Consider 1.—"Herod made a supper for his birthday, for the princes," etc.—Mark vi. 21. Worldly men place their felicity in the enjoyment of this mortal life, which, notwithstanding, passeth away like a shadow. On the contrary, the Holy Ghost saith: "Better is the day of death, than the day of nativity," for that this bringeth us into this world, and into innumerable miseries; the other, if we have lived well, uniteth us with God Himself; therefore, have your eye always upon that, and dispose yourself to it in all your actions.

Consider 2.—Among their cups and dances, was demanded, and granted, the head of a most innocent and holy man; where you may learn, what crimes riot and wantonness beget; whence the wise man saith: "Be not in the feasts of great drinkers."—Prov. xxiii. 20. Herod fell into this precipice, for that he would not hear St. John—which word signifieth grace. Take heed, therefore, you do not expose yourself to the same ruin, by resisting God's holy inspirations: "Woe to thee that spoilest; shalt not thou thyself also be spoiled?"—Isa. xxxiii. 1.

Consider 3.—John received the sentence of death with great joy, and with as great constancy laid his head on the block, whence he breathed forth his blessed soul unto the bosom of Abraham. "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."—Ps. cxv. 15. Beg that you may

come to the like end, whereby you will have a most secure and short passage to heaven; offer yourself often to God for martyrdom; imitate the example of so many glorious martyrs of your country, by the continual practice of virtue, and constancy in faith and religion.

THURSDAY.

FIVE THOUSAND FED IN THE DESERT.—PART I.

Consider 1.—How a great multitude of people followed Christ into the desert, drawn by His miracles and doctrine: "He had compassion on them," etc., "and He began to teach them many things."—Mark vi. 34. He first giveth them spiritual food, afterwards also corporal: you must also retire into the desert, far from the noise of worldly cares, if you desire to be regaled by our Lord: "I will lead her into the wilderness, and I will speak to her heart" —Osee ii. 14,—saith our Lord, of a faithful soul. Observe, also, the apostles' care for the people, saying, "Send away the multitudes, that going into the villages and towns, they may buy themselves meat to eat."—Mark vi. 36.

Consider 2.—Christ having demanded of His disciples what they had to set before the people, "They answered Him: We have here but five loaves and two fishes." This was all the provision of that apostolical family, a few coarse loaves and two fishes, although they were themselves fishermen. Moreover, they promptly exhibit what they have, without alleging their own want or scarcity; that you might learn what you can, to help others: "According to thy ability be merciful."—Tob. iv. 8.

Consider 3.—The order of the miracle: the loaves being brought, "Christ commanded the multitude to sit down upon the grass." The apostles minister, Himself looking up to heaven, blessed the loaves, and distributed them. In the same manner ought you to look up to heaven before you eat; this is, to lift up your heart to the Giver of all good, that you may not fall upon your meat as beasts do: therefore, said David, "Let the just feast, and rejoice before God."—Ps. lxvii. 4.

FRIDAY.

FIVE THOUSAND FED IN THE DESERT.—PART II.

Consider 1.—How the loaves, by divine power, were multiplied in the apostles' hands—Matt. xv. 36;—so that, though they were continually distributing, yet still they found either in their hands, or in the baskets, more to distribute, the angels, as is probable, secretly supplying new provision of loaves and fish. In like manner, formerly, at the prayers of Elias, neither meal nor oil was wanting, although the present provision was daily spent. Who would not willingly serve so good and powerful a Lord? Who can prepare a table in the desert, and is able to bring forth "honey out of the rock, and oil out of the hardest stone?"—Ps. lxxvii. 19; Deut. xxxii. 13.

Consider 2.—"They did all eat, and had their fill." The delights of this world may please and content us for a while, but cannot fill; for the soul's capacity and appetite is greater than to be satisfied with such trash; Christ alone is able to give it full contentment; wherefore He saith by the prophet: "Why do you spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which doth not satisfy you?"—Isa. lv. 2. Come, therefore, to Him, that you may be filled.

Consider 3.—After all had eaten, the apostles gathered out of the leavings more than what they had given out, to wit, "twelve full baskets of fragments." So God is wont to reward the charity of His servants, and is liberal to the liberal: "He that hath mercy on the poor, lendeth to the Lord: and He will repay him."—Prov. xix. 17. Give, therefore, to your brother, "good measure and pressed down and shaken together and running over, shall they give into your bosom."—Luke vi. 38.

SATURDAY.

CHRIST FLEETH, NOT TO BE MADE KING.

Consider 1.—Those men, when they had seen what a miracle Jesus had done, said, "This is, of a truth, the prophet," etc.—John vi. 14. They were astonished at the

strangeness of the miracle, of feeding five thousand with so little provision, and would, therefore, have made Christ their king. Our Lord worketh daily a far greater miracle in feeding the whole world, bringing forth plentiful harvests out of a few grains of corn; why, therefore, do we not make Him king of our heart—obey Him in all things? "Thou art Thyself my King and my God; who commandest the saving of Jacob"—Ps. xliii. 5,—saith King David.

Consider 2.—"Jesus therefore when He knew that they would come to take Him by force and make Him King, fled again into the mountain Himself alone." Sovereignty was due to Christ, as being the Son of God; it was due also to His merits and bountifulness towards men, but He would not accept of it; and whensoever there was any treaty about it, He fled away and hid Himself; how few are there that would do so now. But Christ did it, to teach us to flee honours, as much as lieth in us, and to desire humility and lowliness. See how you are in this point, and whether you do not rather seek after such things as bear a lustre and greatness in the eyes of the world, or, at least, prefer yourself before your companions and neighbours.

Consider 3.—What our Lord did on the mountain: "He went up (saith St. Matthew) into a mountain alone to pray."—Matt. xiv. 23. It was His usual custom to retire Himself far off from the multitudes to pray, and this for our example; for He stood not in need of prayer for Himself, but was continually beholding the face of God by the beatific vision. Imitate, therefore, this example of our Lord, and endeavour to join the contemplative life with the active. "Be not hindered (saith Ecclesiasticus) to pray always."

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the Good Samaritan.

"THE Lord shall bind up the wound of His people; and shall heal the stroke of their wound."—Isa. xxx. 26.

Consider 1.—What is read to-day in the Gospel, of a man that fell among thieves, that wounded him, and of the Samaritan that bound up his wounds.—Luke x. 30. Consider, this man was Adam—the thieves, the devils; who, by original sin, despoiled him, and us all in him, of all grace and other free gifts; and wounded him, as divines teach, in his natural faculties: in the understanding by ignorance, in the will by malice, in the irritable powers by weakness, in the concupiscible by unlawful desires; and these are the four wounds of our nature, as St. Thomas teacheth. Such, therefore, is your state and condition.

Consider 2.—The good Samaritan will come to you this day in the Holy Eucharist, to bind your wounds and take care of you; He will pour into your soul the wine of charity, and the oil of His mercy, wherewith He doth comfort sinners; He will enlighten your understanding, like to the honey by which "Jonathan's eyes were enlightened" —1 Kings xiv. 27;—He will refine and rectify your will, like the burning coal which cleansed the lips of Isaias—Isa. vi. 6;—He will strengthen and enable you to endure hard things, as the loaf that strengthened Elias.—3 Kings xix. 8. Last, He will temper the heat of desire, like the manna which lay upon the ground, "like unto the hoar-frost."—Exod. xvi. 14.

Consider 3.—How much you ought to wish for that hour, wherein this Samaritan is to come to you; say with the prophet, "O that thou wouldst rend the heavens, and wouldst come down"—Isa. lxiv. 1;—and with that other prophet, "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed: save me, and I shall be saved"—Jer. xvii. 14;—and, above all, be sure to entertain Him with hearty love, that cometh so lovingly to you.

MONDAY.

CHRIST'S ALLAYING THE TEMPEST.

Consider 1.—Christ went with His disciples into the boat to pass over the lake, and while they were sailing, "He was in the hinder part of the ship, sleeping upon a pillow."—Mark iv. 38. Our Lord betakes Himself to sleep, though but for a while, to show Himself subject to human infirmities. In the meantime, there ariseth a tem-

pest, the boat is in danger, the disciples are troubled. So Almighty God doth often permit us to be tossed with temptations, and almost overwhelmed, while He, in the meantime, in a manner, sleepeth, that is, deferreth His peculiar assistance, thereby to humble us, and force us the more earnestly to implore His help.

Consider 2.—The disciples seeing themselves in danger, "came to Him, and awaked Him, saying: Lord, save us, we perish"—Matt. viii. 25;—and, "Master, doth it not concern Thee that we perish?" So ought we, with a filial confidence, to have recourse to our Lord, in our temptations, and to say with the psalmist, "Arise, why sleepest Thou, O Lord? arise, and cast us not off to the end."—Ps. xliii. 23. Observe, moreover, how our Lord, being awakened, reprehended His disciples for their little confidence in Him. See whether He may not justly accuse you for the same.

Consider 3.—How Christ "rising up, commanded the winds and the sea, and there came a great calm." So all creatures, even the irrational, obey their Creator; man alone is refractory to His commands, deaf and obstinate to His counsels, and hard to be gained by any fair means; be sorry for having often been such, and be sure to correct yourself for the future; and even "to-day, if you shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

TUESDAY.

CHRIST WALKETH UPON THE WATERS.

Consider 1.—"Christ obliged His disciples to go up into the boat, and to go before Him over the water," while He Himself "went up into a mountain alone to pray"—Matt. xiv. 23;—in the meantime, there arose again a tempest; the boat was tossed with waves, and they laboured in rowing.—Mark vi. 48. Thus we are to suffer temptations, over and over again, wherein we must not neglect ourselves, but take the oars in our hands, use all our endeavours, and betake ourselves to prayer, and the like. Our Lord came to His disciples at last, walking upon the sea, to show His power; He will also be at hand to assist us, and be "a helper in due time, in tribulation."

Consider 2.—The disciples, seeing our Lord walk upon the sea, said, "It is an apparition." So, many hold Christ for a phantom, solid virtue for old wives' devotions, interior inspirations for the effects of a melancholic humour; others, on the contrary, take their own fancies for Christ, their dreams for revelations, their passions for virtues, anger for zeal, and their own private interest for God's greater honour. We must therefore avoid both extremes, and follow that counsel of the apostle: "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits if they be of God."

Consider 3.—Those words of Christ: "It is I, fear ye not." It was a sufficient inducement to them of casting off all fear, to hear Him say, "It is I;" that is—I, who, but a little before, miraculously fed five thousand; I, who allayed the like tempest, by commanding the winds and sea, and do now walk upon the waters, etc. Rejoice for having so powerful a helper and refuge in your necessities.

WEDNESDAY.

PETER WALKETH UPON THE WATERS.

Consider 1.—The fervour of St. Peter, who as soon as he understood it was our Lord, was presently inflamed with an ardent desire of being with Him, saying, "Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee upon the waters."—Matt. xiv. 28. A true lover knoweth not how to be separated from the party He loveth, and overcometh all difficulties that hinder their mutual communication; and we may fitly apply to St. Peter, in this place, those words of the Canticles: "Many waters cannot quench" His "charity; neither can the floods drown it."—Cant viii. 7. See whether you love God in this manner, and not rather permit yourself to be often taken off from His service for small difficulties.

Consider 2.—How St. Peter being bid to come, cast himself into the sea; "but seeing the wind strong, he was afraid; and when he began to sink, he cried out, saying: Lord, save me." So, our Lord doth often permit us almost to sink under our temptations, that we may the more fervently call upon Him. But at length He stretched forth His hand to Peter, and would not let him sink; so He will also do with us, according to the words of the psalmist:

"When he shall fall, he shall not be bruised; for the Lord putteth His hand under him"—Ps. xxxvi. 24,—and "he sent from on high, and took me; and received me out of many waters."—Ps. xvii. 17.

Consider 3.—What it signifieth, mystically, to walk upon the sea. "The world is like a sea (saith St. Augustine), if you love God, you walk upon the sea; if you love the world, this sea will swallow you up." Examine yourself, which of the two you love, God or the world; it is a dreadful thing to be swallowed up. Be sure, therefore, that you walk and trample over this sea, and be mindful of what the same Saint saith, "every one's inordinate desire is his tempest."

THURSDAY.

ST. PETER CONFESSING CHRIST.

Consider 1.—"Jesus came into the quarters of Cesarea Philippi: and He asked His disciples, saying: Whom do men say that the Son of man is?"—Matt. xvi. 13. For it is good sometimes to know what men say of us, both that we may come to know and correct our defects, and that we may strive to make good, and to perfect in ourselves, such things as are said of us to our commendation; but take heed that you do not desire it out of vainglory and ostentation. Observe how Christ called Himself everywhere the Son of Man, though He was the only begotten Son of God; and yet worldly men foolishly stand upon their points and titles of honour.

Consider 2.—The apostles' answer: "Some, John the Baptist, and other some, Elias," etc.; they say not, some a glutton, others a drunkard, and others such like reproaches; to teach us that slanderous reports ought not to be uttered before our brother, not to afflict his mind. Observe how far men were off from the esteem they ought to make of Christ, notwithstanding His miracles did most apparently evince His divinity; that you might cease to wonder if your neighbours or companions undervalue you, or mistake in taking you to be worse than you are; be content to be such, and no more than you are in the sight of God, who seeth all things.

Consider 3.—"But whom do you say that I am?" He puts

the question to His disciples, as having been long brought up in His school, and consequently bound to know more of Him than the rest. "Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God;" not by adoption, as others, but by nature and essence, the true Messias, and Saviour of the world. Rejoice for the divinity of your Lord and Saviour, and stir yourself up both to confess Him in your thoughts and actions, and to bring others likewise to the knowledge and service of Him; according to the psalmist: "I will declare Thy name to my brethren."—Ps. xxi. 23.

FRIDAY.

PRIMACY IS PROMISED TO PETER.

Consider 1.—When Peter had made that famous profession of his faith, our Lord said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father who is in heaven."—Matt. xvi. 17. Our Lord pronounceth him blessed, because the foundation of a happy life is to know Christ. Simon signifieth the same as obedient; Bar-Jona, the son of a dove, or of grace. Be you, therefore, obedient, and, with a dove-like simplicity, endeavour to comply with the divine grace. Do not mind what flesh and blood suggests, but what the Heavenly Father doth inspire you, that you may also become happy.

Consider 2.—Peter's reward. "Thou art Peter," that is a rock, "and upon this rock will I build My Church," etc. 1. Christ giveth him a name suitable to his office. 2. Upon him He foundeth His Church Militant, and makes him the visible head thereof. 3. He promiseth her infallibility, so that the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. 4. He promiseth him likewise the keys of heaven, that is, the key of knowledge, to determine matters of faith without error, and the key of power to remit sins. Rejoice for these privileges granted to the chief pastor for your particular, and the whole Church's general good.

Consider 3.—In what a miserable state are they that deny this primacy of St. Peter, and will not build upon the rock, which cannot be overthrown or rooted up, but upon the sands of their own judgment and private spirit, ground their eternal salvation. Desire and seek, with

most earnest endeavour, suitably to your calling, to bring all men to this rock; and first dispose yourself unto it by the exercise of solid virtues.

SATURDAY.

ST. PETER IS REPREHENDED FOR ATTEMPTING TO DISSUADE CHRIST FROM HIS PASSION.

Consider 1.—How, after St. Peter's confession of Christ's divinity, our Lord commanded His disciples, "that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ"—Matt. xvi. 20,—both to give example of humility, and to avoid ostentation, and as it was not seasonable at that time. And presently after He treated of His Passion. "From that time Jesus began to show His disciples, that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things," etc., that you might learn "in the day of good things, not to be unmindful of evils," as Ecclesiasticus adviseth; and that it is not enough to confess Christ as your God, unless you also have an experimental knowledge and imitation of Him in suffering.

Consider 2.—St. Peter hearing this, being zealous for his Master, took Christ aside, and rebuked Him, saying, "Lord, be it far from Thee, this shall not be unto Thee." This was zeal in him, but an indiscreet one, and "not according to knowledge"—Rom. x. 2,—as the apostle speaketh, for he did not as yet understand how glorious would be the ignominy of the cross. See whether you are not sometimes carried away with the like preposterous zeal in your actions.

Consider 3.—Christ's reprehension: "Go behind Me, Satan, thou art a scandal unto Me: because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men." Ponder how dangerous a thing it is to savour only things that are of men, and to love honours, riches, pleasures, etc., and not rather those things that are of God, as labours, crosses, ignominies. Examine yourself whether you do relish spiritual and divine things, and take real interest in them; at least, make it your endeavour to procure it.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as a Priest.

"Go show thyself to the priest."—Matt. viii. 4. Consider 1.—What is read to-day in the gospel of the ten lepers, of whom it is said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass, as they went, they were made clean."—Luke xvii. 14. As there are several sorts of lepers in the body, for some are but light, and in the skin only; others in the flesh, and mortal; so there are also different kinds of spiritual lepers, or sins. We are all of us leprous in some degree, having our swellings and spots, arising from the abundance of peccant humours and affections. Imagine, therefore, your soul diseased and become a lamentable spectacle in the sight of God; and, with Naaman, the Syrian—4 Kings v. 1,—be desirous to meet with some prophet that may cleanse you.

Consider 2.—The ancient law of God: "If the stroke of the leprosy be in a man, he shall be brought to the priest"—Levit. xiii. 9,—to be condemned as unclean, and to be separated; in the new law, he is brought to the priest to be cleansed. Our high priest is Christ our Lord, according to the words of the psalmist: "Thou art a Priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech."—Ps. cix. 4. How greatly, therefore, ought you wish to appear before this priest in the Eucharist, who, not with water, as Eliseus, but with His own precious "blood will cleanse our conscience (as the apostle saith) from dead works," etc.—Heb. ix. 14.

Consider 3.—That you may be perfectly cleansed, you must imitate the example of the lepers in the gospel. 1. You are to go "to meet Christ," seeking Him with all diligence. 2. "To stand afar off," acknowledging your unworthiness. 3. "To lift up your voice," by fervent prayer. 4. With all humility to implore mercy. Lastly, to follow the counsel and admonitions of your spiritual fathers and directors: "Observe diligently that thou incur not the stroke of the leprosy, but thou shalt do whatsoever the priests of the Levitical race shall teach thee, etc., and fulfil thou it carefully."—Deut. xxiv. 8.

MONDAY.

OUR LORD'S TRANSFIGURATION.—PART I.

Consider 1.—Our Lord vouchsafed to manifest His glory, 1. To confirm the apostles in their faith. 2. To encourage them to carry their cross, which He had lately exhorted them to. 3. To give them beforehand a taste of the heavenly joys. He did it on a high mountain, apart, that we should learn to sequester ourselves from the cares of this world, and climb to the mountain of perfection, if we desire to contemplate the face and glory of our Lord.

Consider 2.—Christ would have few witnesses of His glory; to wit, only three of His disciples; but of His cross and ignominies, all sorts of men. Therefore, upon the cross He saith, by the mouth of the prophet, "O all ye that pass by the way, attend and see," etc. In these three disciples are deciphered unto us three virtues, that accompany contemplation, and concur to our soul's transfiguration. In Peter, faith; in James, hope; in John, charity. See how, in what degree, these virtues are in you.

Consider 3.—"And whilst He prayed, the shape of His countenance was altered."—Luke ix. 29. Our Lord was transfigured while He was praying, to teach us, that prayer doth transform and beautify man's soul, so as sometimes to have influence also upon the body. So Moses, "his face was horned (with rays of glory) from the conversation of the Lord."—Exod. xxxiv. 29. Beseech our Lord to alter and transfigure you into another man, that is, to make you holy; thht having cast off all bad habits, you may be made conformable to His image and likeness. Be much in prayer that you may be enlightened, according to the psalmist, "Come ye to Him and be enlightened: and your faces shall not be confounded."—Ps. xxxiii. 6.

TUESDAY.

OUR LORD'S TRANSFIGURATION.—PART II.

Consider 1.—The manner of this transfiguration: "His face did shine as the sun: and His garments became white as snow."—Matt. xvii. 2. The evangelist had nothing better

to compare it with, but it did incomparably exceed both. Congratulate with your Lord, and His sacred humanity, for this array of glory, which ever was His due, and wherewith He ought always to have been invested, but for our sakes He eclipsed it. Rejoice that your Beloved is thus "white and ruddy, chosen out of thousands, etc., fair as the moon, bright as the sun."—Cant. v. 10; vi. 9.

Consider 2.—There appeared with Him Moses and Elias, two chief lights of the ancient law, to signify, that both the law and the prophets gave testimony of Christ. Think how great was their joy to see their Redeemer, so long wished for by all nations, and whom they themselves had so often foretold, "Send whom Thou wilt send"—Exod. iv. 13,—and the like. Observe how they were both like to Christ in their forty days' fast, and therefore were also made companions with Him in glory.

Consider 3.—The subject of their discourse, for "they spoke of His decease that He should accomplish in Jerusalem."—Luke ix. 31. Our Lord, in the very height of all His glory, discoursed of His ignominious and bitter passion, that you might see how much He made of it, and how He bore it in mind and affection, above all glory. "God forbid that I should glory (as the apostle saith of himself), save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."—Gal. vi. 14. And let not your mind ever be so transported with joy in time of prosperity, as to put off the thoughts or remembrance of death.

WEDNESDAY.

OUR LORD'S TRANSFIGURATION.—PART III.

Consider 1.—The excess of joy in the apostles at so glorious a spectacle: Peter said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here"—Matt. xvii. 4,—and would have fixed his habitation there, and have raised three tabernacles for Christ and His two companions. Think what will be in heaven, if one single drop of heavenly joy could so inebriate the apostles, that, forgetful of all other things, they would remain there for ever. What will the whole ocean of joy do in heaven? "They shall be inebriated with the plenty of Thy house," O Lord: "and Thou shalt make them drink of the torrent of Thy pleasure."—Ps. xxxv. 9.

Consider 2.—A voice came from heaven, saying: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him." Ponder each word, and how He is the only begotten Son of the Eternal Father, consubstantial and co-eternal with Him, and equally immense and omnipotent. See whether you are wont to hear Him exciting you to perfection, contempt of the world, and abnegation of yourself; say at least, hereafter with Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."—1 Kings iii. 10.

Consider 3.—Our Lord, the vision being passed, forbade His disciples to divulge it to any one. "Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of Man be risen from the dead." To give us example of humility, as extraordinary visions and favours of God ought not to be discovered, unless some great profit or necessity require it, and even then, not as our own goods, but as gifts of God, whereof we shall be demanded an account.

THURSDAY.

THE PETITION OF THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE.—PART I.

Consider 1.—"Then came to Him the mother of the sons of Zebedee," etc.—Matt. xx. 20. The mother cometh to petition for her sons, what they themselves wished for; but they interpose their mother's prayers, as a cloak to their own ambition; so men oftentimes make use of other's desires and commands, to cloak their own pretences. Observe, moreover, how the mother cometh in an humble and suppliant manner, and "adoring," presents her petition; because, "ambition (as St. Ambrose witnesseth) first serveth, that it may afterwards domineer; it stoopeth to mean offices, to be served with honour."—Ambr. ii.; Luke iv.

Consider 2.—Her petition: "Say that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left, in Thy kingdom." It is natural to all to be ambitious of the first place; this cast the angels out of heaven. "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God," etc. The same thrust man out of paradise; "you shall be as gods."—Gen. iii. 5. The same assaileth also the apostles: see whether it hath as yet got any hold of you. How much safer is it to follow the counsel and example of Christ, and to sit in the lowest place.

Consider 3.—Christ's answer: "You know not what you ask." They who sue for honours and vanities of this world, truly know not what they desire; it followeth: "Can you drink the chalice that I shall drink?" to wit, the bitter cup of sorrow and affliction; intimating thereby, that the glory of heaven shall be measured to them proportionately to the draught which they shall take of this cup; so that the more one shall drink of this the nearer he shall be seated to Christ; wherefore, encourage yourself to drink manfully of this cup, to the very bottom, for that, as the apostle saith, "As you are partakers of the sufferings, so shall you be also of the consolation."—2 Cor. i. 7.

FRIDAY.

THE PETITION OF THE SONS OF ZEBEDEE.—PART II.

Consider 1.—The apostles are ready to drink the chalice proposed to them: "They say to Him: We can." The like alacrity may proceed from a different spirit: 1. From ambition, refusing no labours, that they may come to what they aim at. 2. Out of a rash fervour, not knowing what they undertake; as war is sweet to them that have had no experience of it. 3. From divine grace, according to the apostle, "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me."—Phil iv. 13. Be ashamed of yourself, for being so slack, and that you have not the courage to undertake that for the kingdom of heaven, which others do, without fear or wit, for some vain honour. You often answer, "I cannot;" whereas, not ability, but will and resolution is wanting.

Consider 2.—Christ seeing this readiness in them, answered, "My chalice indeed you shall drink: but to sit on My right or left hand, it is not Mine to give to you, but to them for whom it is prepared of My Father;" not dissuading them from using their endeavour to deserve the chief seats, but letting them understand, that the gifts of glory are not distributed out of favour, or on account of some temporal relation or respect, but in reward only to their merits: "God is not a respecter of persons"—Acts x. 34,—but "will render to every man according to his works."—Matt. xvi. 27.

Consider 3.—The difference there is between worldly precedency, and that which is proper to the school of Christ, which our Lord explained on this occasion: "The princes of the Gentiles lord it over them," etc. "It shall not be so among you, but whosoever will be the greater among you, let him be your minister," etc., which He confirmeth with His own example, "who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." Let your ambition, therefore, be for the lowest place in all occasions, if you desire to be Christ's disciple.

SATURDAY.

WHO IS THE GREATEST IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

Consider 1.—"At that hour the disciples came to Jesus, saying: Who, thinkest Thou, is the greater in the kingdom of heaven?"—Matt. xviii. 1. There had a little before been a contention among them, "Which of them should be the greater?" and each one would have the first place in heaven for Himself. Thus ambition insinuates itself even into spiritual things and persons; therefore, they ask, "Who is the greater?" etc. And perhaps, some one might think that the rich and principal men in this world were to be preferred before others also in heaven.

Consider 2.—"Jesus calling unto Him a little child, etc., said: Unless you be converted, and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, he is the greater in the kingdom of heaven." Think what it is to become a little one: "Be not children in sense (saith the apostle), but in malice be children." A child preferreth himself before none, arrogates nothing to himself, carrieth himself lovingly to all, and finally lets himself be ruled and governed by his parents; behave yourself, therefore, after the same manner if you desire to enter into the kingdom of heaven; "Narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life"—Matt. vii. 14;—and, therefore, none but they that are little, and low by humility, can enter through it.

Consider 3.—The grievousness of the offence which they commit, that give scandal to Christ's little ones, that is, are occasion of their spiritual ruin, either by word or example: "It were better for him that a mill-stone should

be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea." Take heed, therefore, lest any one be induced to evil by your example, that his blood may not be required at your hands.—Ezech. iii. 18.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as your Lord.

"THOU shalt fear the Lord thy God, and shalt serve Him only."—Deut. vi. 13. Consider 1.—What is read this day in the Gospel: "No man can serve two masters."—Matt. vi. 24. God is your only true and lawful Lord: "I am the Lord, and there is no other"—Isa. xlv. 18;—"All souls are mine: as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine."—Ezech. xviii. 4. No Lord is so perfectly master of anything as God is of you; for He hath an absolute dominion over you:—1. By the title of creation. 2. Of perpetual preservation. 3. Of purchase, having bought you. 4. Of your own voluntary subjection in baptism. Rejoice that you have so great and powerful a Lord: for, as St. Ambrose saith, "It is an honour to be servant to some great Lord."—St. Ambr. in 1 Tim. i.

Consider 2.—The dominion over anything is nothing else but a right to dispose of it at one's pleasure; think, therefore, how often you have violated this right that God hath in you, not permitting Him to dispose of you at His pleasure; and what is worse, you have been rebellious against Him by sin. Oh! how often have you sold yourself to the devil, His capital enemy! "Thou hast forsaken the God that begot thee, and hast forgotten the Lord that created thee."—Deut. xxxii. 18. Think well of this, and be confounded.

Consider 3.—This your Lord will come to you to-day in the Eucharist, to take a fuller possession of you, as His own; for, although He stands not in any need of you, yet He will have you wholly to Himself: "Thou shalt adore the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."

Wherefore renounce all other leagues with the flesh, the world, and the devil, which are against Him; present Him anew with the keys of your heart; ask Him pardon of your former disloyalty, and let Him freely dispose of you in all things. Lastly, let your care hereafter be to please Him alone, in whatsoever you do, for no man can serve two masters.

CONVERSIONS & CURES WROUGHT BY CHRIST.

MONDAY.

THE CONVERSION OF ST. MARY MAGDALEN.—PART I.

Consider 1.—"And behold a woman that was in the city, a sinner," etc.—Luke vii. 37. A sinner, that is, by impurity, although it is not specified, because the apostle would not have it "named among you"—Ephes. v. 3;—so unbecoming is the very name, much more the thing itself, in them that love virtue and sanctity. It is probable she heard our Lord preach, and being touched to the heart by repentance, not expecting opportunity of time or place, "rushed in (as St. Augustine affirmeth) to the banquet"—St. Aug. lib. 1. Homil. 13;—wherefore, do you likewise, after sin, "delay not to be converted to the Lord, and defer it not from day to day."—Ecclus. v. 8.

Consider 2.—The fervour of her penance, wherein is discovered unto us an admirable faith in Christ, His divinity and power of forgiving sins. 2. Humility, not caring to suffer confusion before men; she stood behind (beside) our Lord's feet, as deeming herself unworthy of His sight. 3. The greatness of her love, expressing extraordinary signs of grief, with tears, kissing and anointing His sacred feet. 4. Contempt of worldly things, making her precious ointments, and her very hair and eyes, instruments of penance, which before had been of vanity, that she might punish herself in the same things wherein she had formerly sinned.

Consider 3.—The Pharisee's rash judgment in reproving Christ, for letting Himself be touched by a sinful woman,

whence you may learn that there is no action so holy that is not liable to wrong censures. Most true it is "the sons of men are liars in the balances"—Ps. lxi. 10;—that is, in their judgments; that you may accustom yourself not to regard them, when they are opposite to true piety and devotion.

TUESDAY.

ST. MARY MAGDALEN'S CONVERSION.—PART II.

Consider 1.—Christ's wisdom in reproving the Pharisee, His entertainer, which He did with all modesty and sweetness, as is fitting to do to persons of authority, for avoiding offence. He proposed a parable of two debtors to one creditor. God is the creditor; all we are debtors, some more, some less; neither have we any means to make satisfaction, but by the merits of Christ. The greater, therefore, the debt is that is forgiven us, the greater obligation we have of love and gratitude. See how great your debt is; and consequently, what obligation you have.

Consider 2.—"Dost thou see this woman?" He confounds the Pharisees, and withal our pride, by the example of a sinful woman; for she, acknowledging the favour done her in remitting her great debt, showed more love than those who, little regarding their less debts, were cold in affection. Ask yourself often that question: "Do you see this woman?" and be ashamed for being so far behind her in your love to God, and in works of penance; who perhaps, have received greater favours at His hands; take heed you be not one of those of whom Christ speaketh in those words: "Publicans and harlots shall go into the kingdom of God before you."—Matt. xxi. 31.

Consider 3.—Magdalen's discharge: "Thy sins are forgiven thee." Oh! with what joy must she needs be filled when she heard those comfortable words? Ponder the efficacy of contrition, which, in a moment, blotteth out all the sins of one's former life. Stir yourself up to the like, as often as you go to the sacrament of confession; and as you have followed Magdalen in sin, so follow her likewise in penance: "Confess against thyself thine injustice to the Lord, and He will forgive the wickedness of thy sin."—Ps. xxxi. 5.

WEDNESDAY.

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN'S CONVERSION.—PART I.

Consider 1.—"Jesus therefore being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well"—John iv. 6;—for He travelled on foot like a good shepherd, seeking His lost sheep; and among other corporal miseries, remitted also weariness and thirst. But see with what patience He endured them both; He sat, therefore, at the fountain, well knowing what would follow, not so much seeking rest, as occasion of benefiting others; for "wisdom preventeth them that covet her, so that she first showeth herself unto them."—Wisd. vi. 14. Oh! how often doth she prevent you, and you mind it not?

Consider 2.—There coming a certain woman, a sinner, for water, Christ preventeth her, saying: "Give me to drink:" she refuseth, and withal accuseth Him: "How dost Thou, being a Jew, ask of me to drink," etc. So, many reject Christ, while He moves them interiorly, and seeks to be entertained and refreshed with their virtues. Our Lord did not, therefore, desist from helping this sinner, but offered her living water to drink of: "Thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water."

Consider 3.—The excellence of this water, that is of divine grace, which our Lord promiseth to His faithful: "He that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst for ever," etc. 1. Therefore, it quencheth our thirst, and that for ever. 2. It doth so fill the soul, that it lets it not thirst after any other water, to wit, of earthly comforts. 3. It becometh a fountain of all good to the soul, ever flowing and giving influence to all virtuous actions. 4. "It springeth up into life everlasting;" raising up our thoughts unto it, whose pledge it is; say, therefore, with the woman: "Lord, give me this water, that I may not thirst," etc.

THURSDAY.

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN'S CONVERSION.—PART II.

Consider 1.—The wonderful goodness of Christ, vouchsafing to manifest Himself openly to a sinful woman: "I am He (to wit, the Messias) who am speaking with thee."

Consider the efficacy of her faith; she presently went into the city, leaving her water-pot behind her, to bring others of the city to the same faith. "Come, and see (saith she) a man who has told me all things whatsoever I have done." Such is the fervour of true zeal, which bestirreth itself, and seeketh everywhere whom it may gain to Christ. If, therefore, you be enkindled with true zeal, cast away the pitcher of earthly affections, and seek whom you may likewise inflame.

Consider 2.—The woman being gone, the disciples pressed Christ to eat, for it was that time of day: but He, being intent upon the conversion of the Samaritans, whom He did expect, refused, saying: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work;" that you may learn to prefer the spiritual good of your neighbour, before your own corporal refreshment. Oh! that your meat and drink, your delight and pleasure, were only to do the will of your Heavenly Father!

Consider 3.—How many of the Samaritans, moved by the woman's speeches, came, and were converted, and said to her: "We now believe, not for thy saying; for we ourselves have heard Him, and do know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world?" Rejoice that your Saviour was manifested to those men, and wish that all the world may come to His knowledge; and withal, do your utmost endeavour to bring as many as may be unto Him: "If you walk towards God (saith St. Gregory), procure not to come to Him alone without company."—St. Greg. Hom. vi. in Evan.

FRIDAY.

THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY.

Consider 1.—The Pharisees, seeking to entrap our Lord, take occasion of His meekness; wherefore, they bring unto Him a woman taken in adultery—John viii. 3,—with intent that if, perhaps, He should give His sentence for her dismission, He might be held for a corrupter of the law. So the devil layeth his snares in that virtue wherein we most excel; the zealous he endeavours to provoke to anger, the humble to dejection and pusillanimity, the meek to remissness and too much indulgence: "but there is no

counsel against the Lord"—Prov. xxi. 30;—and Christ "catcheth the wise in their craftiness."—Job v. 13.

Consider 2.—"Jesus bowing Himself down, wrote with His finger on the ground;" so to decline His giving sentence, which might breed contention: therefore, the apostle saith: "No man being a soldier of God, entangleth himself with secular business."—2 Tim. ii. 4. He did it, moreover, to teach us that we ought to proceed warily, and not with precipitation, in such causes. But they still urging Him, "He lifted up Himself, and said to them; He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her:" most wisely, neither clearing, nor yet condemning her; but touching their conscience, and moving them to compunction for their own sins, and commiseration for others; "Be ye merciful, as your Father also is merciful."—Luke vi. 36.

Consider 3.—The Pharisees going away one by one, the woman remained alone, repented of her sin, and probably with an interior faith, expecting absolution thereof from Christ; our Lord, therefore, understanding by her that nobody had condemned her, "Neither will I condemn thee (saith He). Go, and now sin no more." Observe and admire the riches of our Lord's goodness, patience, and longanimity, in bringing you and others to penance. Oh! how often hath He said unto you, "Now sin no more;" and yet you have still gone on; "A man that fasteth for his sins, and doth the same again, what doth his humbling himself profit him?"—Ecclus. xxxiv. 31.

SATURDAY.

THE CANAANEAN WOMAN.

Consider 1.—How a woman of Canaan, a Gentile, came to our Lord, to obtain the cure of her daughter—Matt. xv.,—and see how well she prayeth: 1. With a great faith, confessing Him to be the Son of David. 2. With profound reverence; for "she fell down at His feet." 3. With tender charity, not begging for herself, but for her daughter. 4. With great affection and earnestness, for she cried out after our Lord. 5. With admirable constancy, for she was often put off, yet she still persisted in her petition. Such, likewise, ought to be your prayer.

Consider 2.—How Christ at first answered harshly unto her, and seemingly cast her off like a dog, saying, "It is not good to take the bread of the children, and to cast it to the dogs," so to exercise her virtue, and crown her perseverance. God doth often do the like with us, because, as St. Gregory saith, "He loveth to be entreated, He is willing to be forced, and even desireth to be overcome by importunity."—Greg. in Ps. vi. Pœnit. Observe, moreover, the woman's humility, in not denying herself to be a dog, but requesting that which was proper to dogs, to wit, to eat of the crumbs of their master's table. Let your prayer also be humble; for "the prayer of him that humbleth himself shall pierce the clouds (saith Ecclesiasticus): and he will not depart till the Most High behold."—Ecclus. xxxv. 21.

Consider 3.—Christ, yielding at length to the woman's pious importunity, first commendeth her faith: "O woman, great is thy faith;" then granteth what she asked: "Be it done to thee as thou wilt."—Matt. xv. 28. Perhaps your soul also, like the woman's daughter, "is afflicted" with an evil spirit. He "is sorely vexed," who yieldeth to his troubles and temptations; but he that overcometh them is vexed to his great benefit and crown. Beg, therefore, of our Lord strength and courage to resist; and pray that, as it was to this woman, so it may also "be done to thee as thou wilt."

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the Life of your Soul.

"LOVE the Lord thy God, and obey His voice, and adhere to Him, (for He is thy life, and the length of thy days)."—Deut. xxx. 20. Consider 1.—What is read to-day in the gospel, how Christ raised a young man from death to life; and that He is the true life of your soul, according to the apostle: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in Me although he be dead, shall live"—John xi. 25,—and "as the body dieth (saith St. Augustine)

when the soul is departed, which is its life, so the soul dieth when it loseth God (by sin), who is its life." Ponder the benefit of spiritual life, by comparing it with that of the body; for what a dead carcass is, in the eyes of men, deformed, loathsome and useless in all respects—the same is a soul that is without grace, in the sight of God.

Consider 2.—Christ, with whom "is the fountain of life"—Ps. xxxv. 10,—giveth life to dead souls, by the sacrament of penance, and preserveth the same, and increaseth it by the Holy Eucharist: "He that eateth Me (saith Christ), the same also shall live by Me." And again: "He that eateth this bread shall live for ever."—John vi. 59. You ought, therefore, with a longing desire, to expect that hour, wherein this fountain of life is to come to you; and say with the Psalmist: "As the hart panteth after the fountains of water: so my soul panteth after Thee, O God. My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God."—Ps. xli. 2.

Consider 3.—This spiritual life is not bestowed but upon them that ask it, and that with great devotion: "He asked life of Thee: and Thou hast given him length of days for ever and ever."—Ps. xx. 5. Moreover, as the life of the body is known by its motion and operation, in the same manner the life of your soul, which is Christ, ought to "be manifested in you" by your works, and chiefly by the imitation of His life; for, "he that saith he abideth in Him (saith St. John), ought himself also to walk, even as He walked."—1 John ii. 6.

MONDAY.

THE CONVERSION OF ZACHEUS THE PUBLICAN.—PART I.

Consider 1.—"Behold there was a man named Zacheus: who was the chief of the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus."—Luke xix. 2. The desire of finding Jesus is a rare thing in rich men; but this was the beginning of Zacheus's salvation, for "wisdom is easily found by them that seek her;" and "the beginning of her is the most true desire of discipline."—Wisd. vi. 13, 18. See whether you feel the like desires of perfection, and procure to have them.

Consider 2.—"And he could not for the crowd" see Jesus, therefore he went up into a sycamore tree; that is, according to the Greek word, a silly fig tree. A man of that authority that he was, did not regard the scoffs of the rude people. And you, perhaps, are not able to see Christ nor understand His divine mysteries, for the crowd of worldly thoughts; wherefore retire yourself from them by prayer, and by mortification get up into the silly fig tree; that is, the cross, which "to the Gentiles is foolishness"—1 Cor. i. 23,—for, as St. Gregory saith, "They who, through humility, choose that which is folly to the world, come to contemplate with great subtility the wisdom of God Himself."—Greg. lib. xxvii. Moral. c. 27.

Consider 3.—The charity and mercy of Christ, in granting Zacheus even more than he wished, not only permitting Himself to be seen by him, but also inviting him to His conversation and familiarity: "Make haste and come down: for this day I must abide in thy house." He saith, "in haste;" for the grace of the Holy Ghost knows not slow delay; and, "this day"—while time is, for, perhaps, to-morrow you may not have Me; and you, in like manner, perchance, "To-day if you shall hear His voice," exciting you to greater perfection, and imitation of Himself, "harden not your hearts."—Ps. xciv. 8.

TUESDAY.

THE CONVERSION OF ZACHEUS THE PUBLICAN.—PART II.

Consider 1.—Zacheus's obedience to Christ's call: "And he made haste and came down, and received Him with joy." So ought you do when our Lord calleth, speedily and with joy to receive Him, and to open the door of your heart, as soon as you hear Him knock—Apoc. iii. 20,—lest if you make delay, He turn aside from you, as He did to the spouse in the Canticles, and passed away from her.—Cant. v. 6. Observe, how, "when all saw it, they murmured, saying, that He was gone to be a guest with a man that was a sinner." Whence, you may see, that even the most holy actions are carped at by the malicious; for they understood not the zeal of our Lord, who "came to seek and to save that which was lost."

Consider 2.—How Zacheus, being at length converted by our Lord's words, said, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor," etc. Here the rich man despoileth himself of his wealth, and employeth it partly for the benefit of the poor—partly in satisfaction for what he had unlawfully got. He overcometh himself in a thing the hardest of all, the abandoning of riches: But "the things that are impossible with men (saith Christ), are possible with God"—Luke xviii. 27,—by His grace. See whether you have as yet overcome yourself, at least, in putting off affection to riches, and chiefly in denying your own will.

Consider 3.—Christ approveth of Zacheus's piety: "This day is salvation come to this house;" that is, to the whole family, whereof he was head; so greatly availeth good example in rulers. Beseech our Lord mercifully to work the like salvation in the house of your soul, especially when He cometh to visit you in time of Mass, either by sacramental or spiritual communion, whereunto you may most fitly apply this whole passage.

WEDNESDAY.

CURING THE CENTURION'S SERVANT.—PART I.

Consider 1.—The centurion's servant was fallen sick, and his master being solicitous for him, sent intercessors to Christ—Matt. viii. 6; Luke vii. 2,—saying, "Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented." Observe the master's goodness and care for his servant, as also his faith, wherewith he believed that Christ, though absent, could work the cure. Learn to be ready in works of charity, even to your inferiors; "If thou have a faithful servant (saith the wise man), let him be to thee as thy own soul—treat him as a brother."—Ecclus. xxxiii. 31.

Consider 2.—Christ's charity and goodness: "I will come and heal him." He offereth more than the other asked, to wit, to come in person; whereas, the centurion wished only a single word from Him, for working the cure. "Let men be ashamed at their backwardness (saith St. Augustine), for that God is ready to give more than we to

take." Observe, moreover, how Christ, being another time invited to cure a prince's son, would not go, and now freely offereth Himself, without any entreaty, to go to the centurion's servant: "To beat down our pride (saith St. Gregory), who do regard in men not so much their nature (which is equal and the same in all, etc.) as honours and riches."—St. Greg. Hom. 28, in Evang.

Consider 3.—The centurion hearing that Christ was coming, sent others to meet Him, saying, "Lord, trouble not Thyself. For I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof. For which cause neither did I think myself worthy to come to Thee: but say the word, and my servant shall be healed." Ponder these words, and admire his wonderful humility, by means whereof, while he deemed himself unworthy to receive Christ under his roof, he had now lodged Him in his heart, that you may also imitate him, especially when you communicate.

THURSDAY.

CURING THE CENTURION'S SERVANT.—PART II.

Consider 1.—The rest of the centurion's discourse: "For I also am a man subject to authority, having under me soldiers: and I say to one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doth it." As if he should say: If I, who am but an under officer, and under the command of my captains, yet can say to my servant do this, and he doth it; how much more will all creatures obey your word. An honourable confession of Christ's power. Rejoice, that He is truly such; and withal be confounded, that servants perform stricter obedience to their masters, in things of this world, than you, perhaps, do to God, or your superiors, that are in His place.

Consider 2.—Christ, having heard these words, extolled the faith of the centurion, being but a Gentile, above the Israelites: "Amen I say to you, I have not found so great faith not even in Israel." Whereupon He subjoineth: "And I say to you that many shall come from the east and the west, etc.: but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out," etc. The children of the kingdom of heaven

formerly were the Jews, but now they are become outcasts, because they obeyed not God's call, and we are made the children of that kingdom; and, after a special manner, "A chosen generation, and a kingly priesthood."—1 Pet. ii. 9. Let us, therefore, behave ourselves worthy of such an honour. "Hold that which thou hast (saith our Lord) that no man take thy crown."

Consider 3.—How his request was granted: "Go, and as thou hast believed, be it done to thee;" for our Lord "will do the will of them that fear Him; and He will hear their prayer."—Ps. cxliv. 19. Perhaps you entertain in your soul a will, or affection, that lieth sick of the palsy, that is, seized upon with the spirit of sloth and sluggishness. Imitate, therefore, the fervour and humility of this centurion, and by means of your good friends, that is, the saints, your holy patrons, beg remedy of our Lord; but especially when you go to communion, use those words of the centurion, and with like faith, Lord, "I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof."

FRIDAY.

THE CURING OF ST. PETER'S MOTHER-IN-LAW.

Consider 1.—Our Lord being entered into Peter's house, found his mother-in-law lying sick of a violent fever, but the disciples "besought Him for her."—Luke iv. 38. Observe the apostles' readiness to intercede for another, and the efficacy of their intercession, for she was immediately cured. We all of us have some spiritual fever or other, being set on fire by the allurements of divers unlawful desires. "Our fever (saith St. Ambrose) is covetousness; our fever is lust; our fever is ambition," etc. See what you are most sick of, and take the apostles for your intercessors, that you may be cured.

Consider 2.—The manner in which Christ delivered the sick person: "Standing over her, He commanded the fever, and it left her." He did not drive it away with medicines as the physicians do, but by command alone, to show His power and divinity. So, at other times, He commanded the winds and sea, and the devils, and they obey Him; for, as the members of our body obey the soul, and move only

at her will, so all creatures obey God. Rejoice that you have so powerful a Lord: "He said, and they were made; He commanded, and they were created." Do you likewise endeavour to obey Him in all things.

Consider 3.—St. Peter's mother-in-law being cured, "immediately rising, she ministered to them." She pretended not weakness after her sickness, nor desired to give herself any more to rest, but presently betook herself to labour and pains, like that famous woman in the Proverbs: "She hath girded her loins with strength, and hath strengthened her arm."—Prov. xxxi. 17. Wherefore it will prove an effect of your spiritual health, to work, fervently, and to be ready for all charitable offices.

SATURDAY.

A RULER'S SON RESTORED TO HEALTH.

Consider 1.—There came unto Christ "a certain ruler whose son was sick at Capharnaum, etc., and prayed Him to come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death."—John iv. 46, 47. Observe how profitable corporal infirmities and afflictions are, which force us to have recourse to God; for, unless the son had fallen sick, perhaps the father had never been brought to the faith of Christ. So it is written of King Manasses, while he was captive, that "after he was in distress, he prayed to the Lord his God," etc., and Manasses "knew that the Lord was God."—2 Paral. xxxiii. 13. Therefore, take the like infirmities and afflictions, as so many benefits and incitements to virtue. "Their infirmities were multiplied (saith David); afterwards they made haste."—Ps. xv. 4.

Consider 2.—Christ's answer. 1. He reprehended them that seek miracles out of incredulity. 2. He refuseth to go to the house where He was desired, because it is not fitting we should prescribe to God the manner of succouring us. 3. Yet He mercifully giveth recovery and health though absent, the more to manifest His power, and to strengthen our faith; for He it is "who commandeth the saving of Jacob."—Ps. xliii. 5. Learn, hence, not to seek miracles, visions, or extraordinary favours, but to commit yourself wholly to God, as to the way and manner of helping you. Beseech Him, that if you be not worthy that He come to

your house in the Eucharist, at least, that He would "send thee help from the sanctuary; and defend thee out of Sion." —Ps. xix. 3.

Consider 3.—"The man believed the word which Jesus said to him," and thereby received health both of body, for his son, and of soul, for himself and his whole family; for "himself believed and his whole house;" so God heapeth favours upon favours. Beseech Him humbly to work also in you perfect health, both of body and soul.

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as your Soul's Guest.

"Let the King come to the banquet," etc., "and to-morrow I will open my mind to the King."—Esther v. 8. Consider 1.—What is read this day in the gospel, how Christ entered into the house of a certain Pharisee, "upon the Sabbath-day to eat bread."—Luke xiv. 1. He is also the guest of our souls, and He will enter this day into the house of your soul, in the Holy Eucharist, to feast with you, according to St. John: "If any man open to Me the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."—Apoc. iii. 20. Consider, therefore, attentively, the greatness and majesty of this guest, and also the words of the evangelist as spoken upon you by Him: "Make ready My supper, and gird thyself."—Luke xvii. 8.

Consider 2.—This divine guest feedeth, as the holy Fathers teach, upon our virtues. But above all, He is delighted with humility; and, therefore, while He was at table to-day with the Pharisee, He taught us to choose the lowest place in banquets. And the spouse in the Canticles saith, "While the King was at His repose, my spikenard sent forth the odour thereof."—Cant. i. 11; Bern. Ser. 4 de Assump. The spikenard is a low plant, saith St. Bernard, and an emblem of humility. Therefore be careful to prepare "such meat" for your "Father," as you know He "gladly eateth"—Gen. xxvii. 9,—and humble yourself as much as you can in all things.

Consider 3.—The liberality of this your guest, who, wheresoever He cometh, bringeth with Him gifts and pledges of His bounty. So this day, in the house of the Pharisee, He cured one sick of the dropsy. And if you look well into yourself, perchance you will find that you are afflicted with the same disease, that is, full of watery humours of worldly affections, whereof an evident sign is the burning thirst you have after things that are delightful to sense. Beseech, therefore, your divine guest to cure you of this dropsy, and say with the psalmist, "Save me, O God: for the waters are come in even unto my soul."—Ps. lxviii. 2.

MONDAY.

THE MAN SICK OF THE PALSY CURED AT THE POND OF PROBATICA.—PART I.

Consider 1.—What a benefit God bestowed on the Jews in the pond of Probatica (Bethsaida), near the temple, wherein the sheep were washed for sacrifice.—John v. 2, etc. For, 1. The water was stirred by an angel. 2. It received thereby virtue to cure all manner of diseases, in such as entered first after the motion. This was a type of the sacrament of baptism and penance, wherein Christ's sheep are washed for the "sacrifice of justice"—Ps. l. 21,—and which, 1. Have a heavenly virtue infused into them by the Angel of the Testament, Christ our Lord. 2. They cleanse us from all manner of sin. 3. Not only the first comers, but all and everyone, without any exception or cessation. Ponder the greatness of this benefit and endeavour to make due use of these divine fountains.

Consider 2.—At this pond lay a great multitude of "sick, of blind, of lame, of withered, waiting for the moving of the water;" so God will have us to expect with patience His gifts; whence David said, "With expectation I have waited for the Lord: and He was attentive to me." Among other infirm persons, "there was a certain man there, that had been eight and thirty years under His infirmity"—John v. 5,—of the palsy. The spiritual palsy is a dissolution of the nerves, and faculties of the soul, a defect of spiritual vigour and life, and as it were a deadening of the

spirit. See how many years you may reckon in this infirmity, and seek remedy by the baths of the holy sacraments.

Consider 3.—The goodness of Christ, freely inviting the sick man to His own cure. "Wilt thou be made whole?" God can justify us by Himself alone, but will not do it without our own consent: "He made you (saith St. Augustine) without your knowledge, but He justifieth you with your consent." See whether "you will," that is, efficaciously, "be made whole," for God is ever ready on His part.

TUESDAY.

THE MAN SICK OF THE PALSY CURED AT THE POND. PART II.

Consider 1.—"Sir, I have no man," etc.—John v. 7. He confessed his inability, for that he could neither move of himself, to get down time enough into the pond, nor had any man to help him; whence he presently received health of Christ; for the humble confession of our own weakness is the best disposition to obtain God's assistance. Perhaps you have cause to say of yourself, "I have no man," that is, I have not the heart or courage of a man, to overcome myself; though truly you have one of Christ our Lord, who is ready to raise you up with His grace: you have also preachers, superiors, and directors, to admonish you, and if you will yourself, also to help you.

Consider 2.—The efficacy of Christ's words, wherewith without more ado, he cured the sick man: "Arise, take up thy bed, and walk," etc. O Lord, speak so likewise to me, "Say to my soul: I am Thy salvation."—Ps. xxxiv. 3. Ponder the man's obedience, who presently arose up, and though it were the Sabbath-day, took his bed upon his shoulders, and so walked: giving us a perfect example of blind obedience. Do you, therefore, if you be sound, carry your bed, take up the light yoke of the Lord, and "walk," not in the high and strange things, above yourself; but with Abraham, "before," or in the sight of "God, and be perfect."—Gen. xvii. 1.

Consider 3.—Christ, after He had wrought the miracle, "went aside from the multitude," to give us example shunning the applause of men. "Afterwards Jesus findeth him

in the temple, and saith to him: Behold thou art made whole; sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee." Imagine the same to be spoken to you, as often as you go to sacrament of penance; return not back, "like the dog to his vomit; or the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire."—2 Pet. ii. 22.

WEDNESDAY.

THE BED-RIDDEN LET DOWN FROM THE ROOF.—PART I.

Consider 1.—There were gathered together a great multitude to hear Christ in the house where He was, "so that there was no room, no not even at the door; and He spoke to them the word."—Mark ii. 2. Observe our Lord's indefatigable zeal in gaining souls, not sparing Himself at any time or place, but freely admitting and instructing all; even with open doors, that you might learn to "bestow yourself, and to be bestowed (again with the apostle) for the souls" of your brethren.

Consider 2.—"And behold men brought in a bed a man who had the palsy, etc., and when they could not find by what way they might bring him in, because of the multitude, they went up upon the roof, and let him down through the tiles with his bed into the midst before Jesus."—Luke v. 18, 19. Admire their faith, whereby they undoubtedly believed that Christ would cure him; so that they refuse no pains to bring him to Him. Observe, moreover, their courage and resolution, in not yielding to the difficulties that hindered their free access, but breaking their way through all, so that they accomplished their desire. "A true firm belief (saith St. Bonaventure) is not brought back, or cooled by impediments, but inflamed." See how you are on the like occasions, and how easily you are deterred.

Consider 3.—The mercy of Christ, saying, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee."—Matt. ix. 2. "O wonderful humility (saith St. Jerome), a decrepid and despicable poor man He calleth son, whom the priests vouchsafed not to touch." Observe how He remitteth his sins, which were the cause of his infirmity, to teach you that diseases are inflicted also for hidden sins, and that when you are sick, you must first seek your soul's cure, then that of your body.

THURSDAY.

THE BED-RIDDEN LET DOWN FROM THE ROOF.—PART II.

Consider 1.—The Pharisees murmuring; "Who is this who speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"—Luke v. 21. Condole with Christ for being a blasphemer, and be not troubled if at any time you be treated below your deserts. Observe Christ's mildness; He is not moved to indignation, He seeketh not to revenge Himself, as He could most easily have done, but sweetly endeavoureth to bring them out of their error: "Why do you think evil in your hearts?"—Matt. ix. 4.

Consider 2.—Christ, in proof of His divinity, and power of forgiving sins, presently cured the man, and sent him away free from his palsy, saying, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house." Your house and home is heaven, here you are but a stranger and passenger; therefore, hasten home, and fix your thoughts, cares, and desires there, where you are to dwell for ever: "Man shall go (saith the wise man) into the house of his eternity"—Eccles. xii. 5;—and St. Augustine, "A house is taken, as it were for ever; a nest is made up but for a time." Do not, therefore, make more of your transitory nest than of your permanent mansion-house.

Consider 3.—The man being cured, "went away to his own house, glorifying God." It is the proper effect of spiritual health to magnify God, and to give Him thanks for benefits received. Do you also magnify God as often as you are dismissed in the sacrament of penance, free from the dead palsy of sin; say with David, "I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall be always in my mouth."—Ps. xxxiii. 2.

FRIDAY.

THE WITHERED HAND CURED.

Consider 1.—"It came to pass also on another Sabbath, that He entered into the synagogue, and taught. And there was a man whose right hand was withered," etc.—Luke vi. 6. Our most merciful Lord taketh hold of all occasions of converting souls; wherefore on the Sabbath

days He frequented the synagogues, that being then gathered together, He might the better teach them heavenly things. In the synagogue He found a man whose right hand was withered, for many there are, even in God's Church, that have their left hands ready for mischief, but their right hands withered, and unable to do any good; "and their right hand is the right hand of iniquity."—Ps. cxliii. 8. See whether your hand be not thus withered.

Consider 2.—"Then He said to the man: Stretch forth thy hand, and he stretched it forth, and it was restored to health."—Matt. xii. 13. Our Lord could as easily have done the cure without stretching forth; but He will have us also to co-operate in our own behalf, according to that of the prophet: "Turn ye to Me," etc., "and I will turn to you."—Zach. i. 2. Stretch forth, therefore, your hand to good works, to help your brother, and in frequent prayer to God, and you will undoubtedly obtain perfect health: "Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly"—Eccles. ix. 10,—saith the wise man.

Consider 3.—The Scribes and Pharisees having seen the miracle, instead of receiving the benefit thereof, whereby they might have wrought their own salvation, they took occasion thereby, through envy, to contrive Christ's death; but "He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh at them."—Ps. ii. 4. And Christ, although He could have destroyed them in a moment, yet He chose rather to bear with them, and withdraw Himself for a time to another place, to teach you meekness.

SATURDAY.

THE CROOKED WOMAN CURED.

Consider 1.—Christ being again in the synagogue, according to His custom, "behold there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years: and she was bowed together, neither could she look upwards at all."—Luke xiii. 11. This infirmity was caused by the devil, as Christ Himself witnesseth; and this either in punishment of sin, as it was in Giezi's leprosy, or by God's permission, for exercise of her virtue, as it happened to blessed Job. Mystically, the devil causeth the like crookedness in all our souls, which he makes to stoop down to worldly things, and

keeps them so fixedly bent upon them, that they cannot look up, nor raise their thoughts to heaven. Of such it is said, "They turned away their eyes that they might not look unto heaven, nor remember just judgments."—Dan. xiii. 9. See whether you be not likewise crookedly bent in your works and intentions.

Consider 2.—The mercy of Christ, of His own accord, calling the woman to Him, and curing her: "Woman, thou art delivered from thy infirmity;" and the effect presently seconded His omnipotent Word; for, having imposed His hands upon her, "immediately she was made straight, and glorified God." Observe and imitate this woman's gratitude, who, as soon as she saw herself cured, "glorified God." See how much more reason you have to be ever grateful, and to glorify God, "who healeth all thy diseases." Say with Moses, "The Lord is my strength and my praise, and He is become salvation to me: He is my God, and I will glorify Him."—Exod. xv. 2.

Consider 3.—The perverse zeal of the ruler of the synagogue, who "was angry that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath;" as if it were not lawful to do a good work, although not servile, on the Sabbath day; thus many pretend zeal for their passions. Procure to do all your actions with a sincere and upright intention, as in the sight of God, and you will not fear what judgments men may pass upon them. "Fear ye not the reproach of men: and be not afraid of their blasphemies. For the worm shall eat them up as a garment: and the moth shall consume them as wool."—Isa. li. 7, 8.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as your Soul's Love.

"Behold, My beloved speaketh to Me: Arise, make haste, My love, etc., and come."—Cant. ii. 10. Consider 1.—What is commanded in this day's gospel: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind," etc.—Matt. xxii. 37. God

would be our soul's love; therefore, He often calleth them His beloved, His spouse, His sister: "Open to Me, My sister, My love, My dove," etc.—Cant. v. 2. And because love is gained by love, "Let us therefore love God, because God hath first loved us."—1 John iv. 19. "Who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood."—Apoc. i. 5. Never any mother loved her child so tenderly, nor spouse His beloved, as God doth man, making Himself, 1. His companion. 2. His food. 3. His ransom; and, lastly, his everlasting reward; so that He most justly deserveth to be loved by you, "with your whole heart, with your whole soul, and with your whole mind."

Consider 2.—This, your beloved, will enter to-day, in the holy Eucharist, the lodging of your heart, that you may, at leisure, enjoy His sweet conversation, His chaste embraces, and affectionate entertainments of love: "If any one love Me," etc., "My Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him."—John xiv. 23. Think what a torrent of heavenly graces will flow into your soul, by the benefit of this abode, if you be rightly disposed; for He saith of Himself, "With Me are riches and glory, glorious riches and justice," etc. "That I may enrich them that love Me, and may fill their treasures."—Prov. viii. 18, 21.

Consider 3.—The disposition on your side must be love for love, and that the greatest you can stretch unto; which consisteth more in deeds and actions, than in words and affections; whence He saith, "If any man love Me, he will keep My word;" that is, My commandments, My counsels, My admonitions. See, therefore, how little observing you have hitherto been of them, and procure that hereafter you may be able to say with the spouse, "My beloved to Me, and I to Him"—Cant. ii. 16,— in willing and not willing, the same in all things with Him, by a perfect union of wills.

MONDAY.

THE LEPER.—PART I.

Consider 1.—There came unto Christ a leper to be healed. 1. He besought our Lord with profound reverence, "kneeling down."—Mark i. 40. 2. With great faith, con-

fessing our Lord's power: "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean."—Luke v. 12. 3. With resignation, not asking anything absolutely, but conditionally only: "If Thou wilt;" if it be so pleasing to Thy will: such ought also to be your petitions; humble, full of faith, and resigned to the divine will: "To whom shall I have respect, but to him that is poor and little, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at My words."—Isa. lxvi. 2.

Consider 2.—Our Lord's clemency. He disdained not the presence and sight of the loathsome spectacle, nor did He put off the cure till another day; and although He could have healed him with one single word, yet, to correct our niceness in like occasions, He would also touch him; wherefore, "stretching forth His hand, He touched him, saying: I will, be thou made clean."—Matt. viii. 2. Observe the word, "I will," as if He should say, I both will and desire, for My part, for God "will have all men to be saved."—1 Tim. ii. 4. See, therefore, it be not owing to yourself, that you are not cleansed from your spiritual leprosy.

Consider 3.—The spiritual leprosy of the soul, which is sin, is like that of the body; for both defile the subject wherein it is, and render it a most loathsome spectacle; that in the sight of God, this to the eyes of men: but that of the soul is much more detestable, by how much the more dangerous consequence it is of, as disposing to death, not temporal, but eternal; whence, St. Louis, the king, with good reason, said, as it is related of him, that he had rather incur the leprosy of his body than sin; and that he sharply reprehended one of his nobles for making the contrary choice.

TUESDAY.

THE LEPER.—PART II.

Consider 1.—Our Lord having, by His divine power, cured the leper, "saith to him: See thou tell no man."—Matt. viii. 4. Christ knew that he would publish the miracle to all, as afterwards he did out of gratitude; neither was there any danger of vainglory in Christ; yet He did so, for our instruction, teaching us to shun the like danger with all our endeavour, for "vainglory (as St. Basil

saith) is a robber of our spiritual riches, a flattering enemy of our souls, the moth of virtues," etc. Think with yourself how much you are subject to this vice in your actions, and take heed it may not also be said of you, "You have received your reward."—Matt. vi. 5, 16.

Consider 2.—"Go, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded, for a testimony to them." The law of Moses reserved to the priests the judgment both of the leprosy itself, in case of doubt, and of its cure. See, therefore, 1. How observant Christ was of the law. 2. How He honoured those priests, although ever most spiteful to Him. 3. How much greater prerogative did He confer upon the priest of the new law, to whom He gave power to cleanse and take away all manner of spiritual leprosy; there do you also, as often as you find yourself infected with the like leprosy, "go, and show yourself to the priest."

Consider 3.—The leper was also to make an offering—Levit. xiv.,—for in the ancient law, after the shaving of his hair, he was commanded to wash his clothes and his body, and to offer a lamb without spot in sacrifice. Let your offering, as often as you return from the sacrament of confession, be a sacrifice of praise, according to the psalmist: "Offer to God the sacrifice of praise"—Ps. xlix. 14,—and withal, the immaculate Lamb of God in the sacrifice of the Mass.

WEDNESDAY.

THE TEN LEPERS.—PART I.

Consider 1.—Our Lord passing through the midst of Samaria, and entering a town, "there met him ten men that were lepers, who stood afar off; and lifted up their voice, saying: Jesus, master, have mercy on us."—Luke xvii. 12, 13. Observe also in these the manner of praying well. 1. With humility and reverence, "they stood afar off." 2. Unanimously and with fervour, "they lifted up their voice;" for earnest and fervent prayer is pleasing to God; wherefore David said, "When I cried to Him He heard me."—Ps. xxi. 25. 3. They say not heal us, but "have mercy on us;" only begging mercy of Him, and leaving the whole matter and manner to God. Do you the like in your occasions.

Consider 2.—"Whom when He saw, He said: Go, show yourselves to the priests." He could have healed them at that instant, but He would make trial of their obedience, sending them to the priests, for the greater respect, also, and observance of the law; moreover to teach us that we ought to repair unto the priests, and to disclose ourselves to them, as often as we are stricken with the leprosy of sin; and for your part, sleep not so much as one night in this leprosy; for what if, in that very night, God should take your soul from you? Your leprosy would stick to you for all eternity.

Consider 3.—"And it came to pass, as they went, they were made clean." Ponder their prompt obedience, and the fruit thereof; so it often happeneth to them that are tempted, that even while they are but going to manifest themselves to their ghostly father, they find themselves free, and the enemy gone. So likewise those that dispose themselves to confession, God doth often justify beforehand by contrition; "I said (saith the prophet) I will confess against myself my injustice to the Lord; and Thou hast forgiven the wickedness of my sin."—Ps. xxxi. 5. Go, therefore, always speedily, that you may speedily be cleansed.

THURSDAY.

THE TEN LEPERS.—PART II.

Consider 1.—"And one of them when he saw that he was made clean, went back, with a loud voice glorifying God."—Luke xvii. 15. So ought we to be thankful to God, for the benefits we receive from Him, according to the words of the apostle: "In all things give thanks: for this is the will of God."—1 Thess. v. 18. This is to be performed: 1. With a loud voice; that is, with a great and hearty affection. 3. With "magnifying God"—Ps. xxxiii. 4,—and, with David, "exalting His name for ever." 3. With due humility, falling prostrate at our Lord's feet, acknowledging ourselves unworthy of His so great mercies and benefits. "There can be no offering made more grateful to God (saith St. Augustine) than that of thanksgiving."—Aug. in Ps. lxix. 43.

Consider 2.—Of ten that were cleansed, only one returned back: "There is no one found to return and give glory to

God, but this stranger." Think how few there are among so many thousands, whom God doth daily preserve and feed, that acknowledge the benefit; they take their meat, which is sent from heaven, even like brute beasts, without once lifting up their head or thoughts thither: "I have brought up children, and exalted them: but they have despised Me"—Isa. i. 2,—saith our Lord. These carry themselves as inhabitants and sons of the earth, and as if they had here a settled habitation; but do you account yourself as an alien, a stranger, and pilgrim in this world, and then you will come to acknowledge God's gifts and favours unto you in all things.

Consider 3.—This stranger, being grateful for the recovery of his corporal health, received yet a far greater benefit, the cure of his soul, in his conversion to the faith; therefore, our Lord said unto him, "Arise, go thy way: for thy faith hath made thee whole." The other nine probably were reprobate: "For the faith of the ungrateful shall melt as winter ice, and shall perish as unprofitable water." Be not, therefore, ungrateful to God.

FRIDAY.

THE DEAF AND DUMB MAN.—PART I.

Consider 1.—While Christ was passing through Galilee, "they bring to Him one deaf and dumb; and they besought Him that He would lay His hand upon him."—Mark vii. 32. Ponder how meritorious a thing it is to bring others to Jesus; and excite yourself thereunto, endeavouring by such means as your calling doth afford, to bring to Christ those that you shall find to be spiritually deaf and dumb. Consider what it is to be spiritually deaf. He is deaf, that gives not ear to the truths of faith, and that hears not the voice of God, calling and exciting him to perfection. See whether you be affected by this deafness, and do not stop your ears to God, lest He do the same to you, according to the wise man: "Then shall they call upon Me, and I will not hear."—Prov. i. 28.

Consider 2.—What it is to be spiritually dumb. He is dumb that corrects not his brother when he sinneth, nor hindereth his sin when he may; whence such are called by

the prophet, "dumb dogs not able to bark."—Isa. lvi. 10. He is dumb that doth not preach Christ to others when he ought. Lastly, he that makes not due use of his tongue, to the praise and honour of God, in divine exercise of devotion, in pious discourses and the like, "Woe is me (saith Isaias), because I have held my peace"—Isa. vi. 5;—and "you that are mindful of the Lord, hold not your peace."—Isa. lxii. 6.

Consider 3.—Christ rejected not the deaf and dumb man, but took him aside from the multitude, and cured him. Do you also retire from noise and company, to prayer and spiritual exercises, if you desire to be cured by Christ. Observe how He cured this man, not by His word only, or command, as He did others, but "He put His fingers into his ears, and spitting, touched his tongue," etc. Because our Lord doth diversely cure, and exercise those that are His; some more, some less. Submit in all things to His divine pleasure, that you may be cured of all your infirmities.

SATURDAY.

THE DEAF AND DUMB MAN.—PART II.

Consider 1.—After our Lord had spoken the word, "Be thou opened, immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right."—Mark vii. 34, 35. Consider how that the sign of our ears being opened, is not to contradict or resist the divine inspirations, but humbly to obey them; according to the prophet: "The Lord hath opened my ear, and I do not resist."—Isa. l. 5. See, therefore, whether the ears of your heart be open, or whether you be not rather of those that stop their ears, "which will not hear the voice of the charmers; nor of the wizard that charmeth wisely."—Ps. lvii. 5, 6.

Consider 2.—How it is said of the cured person, not that he spoke much, but that "he spoke right;" that we might learn to have a care of our tongue, which is, as St. James saith, "a world of iniquity."—James iii. 6. He speaketh right that speaketh nothing but the praises of God, or that appertains to salvation; who speaketh not in vain or idle matters, nor uttereth detraction nor murmurings. Examine how you are wont to speak; and remember that, as David

saith, "A man full of tongue shall not be established in the earth."—Ps. cxxxix. 12.

Consider 3.—Christ likewise here "charged them that they should tell no man," to teach us to shun, as far as we can, the applause of men; "but so much the more a great deal did they publish it, and so much the more did they wonder." Neither were they disobedient in this, because Christ did not command with intention of obliging them, but did therein what, on His part, was humility, and they returned honour and glory, which was but the duty of gratitude on their part. Lastly, it is said here of Christ, "He hath done all things well;" that you might learn not to be content with doing only some things well, neglecting others, but to do all well: whence the apostle saith, "In all things let us exhibit ourselves as the ministers of God." 2 Cor. vi. 4.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the Strength of your Soul.

I WILL love thee, O Lord, my strength: the Lord is my firmament, my refuge, and my deliverer."—Ps. xvii. 2, 3. Consider 1.—What is read to-day in the gospel—Matt. ix. 2,—of Christ curing the man sick of the palsy, etc. The soul's palsy is an enervation of spirit, and utter decay of its strength, by sluggishness, sloth, and pusillanimity. Think how far you are gone in this disease; how weak you are in bearing adversity; how faint-hearted in undertaking anything of difficulty for God; how inconstant in keeping your good purposes; lastly, how slack and remiss, and even languishing you are, in all matters of devotion; you may, with truth, say with the psalmist, "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue hath cleaved to my jaws." Ps. xxi. 16.

Consider 2.—God is properly the fortitude and strength of our soul, according to the words of the prophet: "O Lord, my might, and my strength"—Jer. xvi. 19;—and, "the Lord is my strength, and my praise."—Isa. xii. 2. But He doth work this effect chiefly in the Eucharist, afford-

ing to the soul abundant strength to get out of this dead palsy, to overcome all fears and difficulties, and to undertake and go through, with what enterprise soever, for God's sake; hence it is called "the bread of the strong ones—the meat of the great ones—the bread that confirmeth or strengtheneth the heart of man;" a type or figure whereof, was that loaf of bread that was brought to Elias—3 Kings xix. 8,—in whose strength he walked forty days and forty nights, unto the mount of God. Wish, therefore, with a longing desire for that happy hour, wherein you are to receive this Divine food.

Consider 3.—That you may be rightly disposed to obtain the cure of your palsy, you must imitate the faith of this sick man; go, therefore, with great confidence, and put yourself into the arms of the holy saints, your patrons, but especially of the Blessed Virgin, that they may conduct and present you to our Lord; say with the psalmist, "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped," etc.—Ps. xxx. 2. "Thou hast made my arms like a brazen bow."—Ps. xvii. 35. "And in my God I shall go over the wall," etc. "For Thou art my strength, and my refuge."—Ps. xxx. 4.

MONDAY.

HE THAT WAS BORN BLIND.—PART I.

Consider 1.—"Jesus passing by, saw a man who was blind from his birth"—John ix. 1;—He beheld him with the eyes of mercy, and presently thought of remedy. Beseech Him to look also upon you with the like affection; "See my abjection and my labour; and forgive me all my sins."—Ps. xxiv. 18. We are all blind from our mother's womb—born in sin, and involved in the darkness of ignorance, through the fault of our first parents; but they are blind, after a special manner, from their nativity, who vainly boast of their noble birth and parentage, not seeing that "virtue alone (as one saith) is the only true nobility."—Juven. Sat. Think whether these things have place in you.

Consider 2.—The disciples having asked, "Who hath sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?" Christ answered: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made

manifest in him." Whence you may understand, that sickness and calamities are not always caused by sin, but are often sent us by God for His greater glory, and exercise of our virtue, as is proved in holy Job, Tobias, and others. "I must work the works of Him that sent Me (Christ saith), whilst it is day;" that is, while the day of this mortal life lasteth. Much more, it behoveth you to do the like works, while your day is, "before you go unto the dark land, that is covered with the mist of death."

Consider 3.—Christ "spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle, and spread the clay upon his eyes." He applied a contrary remedy to show His power. If you desire to be delivered from the spiritual blindness of your soul, lay the clay, or dirt, of your first creation upon the eyes of your heart; remember, man, that "dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return."—Gen. iii. 19.

TUESDAY.

HE THAT WAS BORN BLIND.—PART II.

Consider 1.—The gratitude of this man, in publishing to all the benefit which he received: "That man that is called Jesus, made clay," etc.—John ix. 11. 2. His constancy in professing Christ as a prophet, even before the Pharisees, with danger of life and fortune. 3. His patience in bearing contumelies, as that of the Pharisees: "Thou wast wholly born in sins, and dost thou teach us?" Such are the affections of a soul illuminated by God; think how you may imitate.

Consider 2.—He was presently cast forth of the synagogue by the Pharisees, for speaking so well of Christ, that you might learn to suffer willingly for a good cause: for "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus (saith the apostle), shall suffer persecution."—2 Tim. iii. 12. Christ neglected not him that was made an outcast for His sake, but rewarded him with the gift of perfect faith, seeking after him, and freely manifesting His divinity unto him, which "he falling down, adored." Often stir up in yourself the like acts of faith, and falling prostrate, adore your Lord.

Consider 3.—The words of Christ reproving the Pharisees' pride, who, notwithstanding, were wise and quick-

sighted in their own opinion: "For judgment I am come into this world; that they who see not, may see, and they who see, may become blind;" that is, that idiots and simple people may come to know the truth; but the wise and proud men of the world be stricken blind at the greatness of His splendour; therefore, "be not wise in thy own conceit"—Prov. iii. 7,—lest thou become blind, and like a blind man, run headlong into perdition.

WEDNESDAY.

THE BLIND MAN OF JERICHO.

Consider 1.—"It came to pass, when he drew nigh to Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the way-side, begging."—Luke xviii. 35. This is a lively figure of a sinner, blind of both eyes, to wit, of knowledge and love. For, 1. "He sitteth" in darkness, and taketh rest and satisfaction in his sordid condition, being habituated in sin. 2. "By," and not in "the way," wherein the virtuous do cheerfully run, according to the psalmist: "I have run the way of Thy commandments."—Ps. cxviii. 32. 3. He sitteth "begging" some petty comfort and content from creatures; think what an unhappy state this is of these blind men, who see not, though you set before their eyes the joys of heaven, or torments of hell; but, as Saint Augustine saith, "they walk through darkness into darkness."—August. Soliloq. c. xxxv.

Consider 2.—The fervour of this blind man, when he heard that it was Christ that passed by: 1. He crieth out, with a strong faith, professing His power, and imploring His mercy, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." 2. He persisteth constant, though others endeavoured to hinder him. 3. He increaseth his fervour, by their opposition; "but he cried out much more," etc. Learn constancy in the service of God, and mind not them that would draw you off; learn to persevere in prayer with fervour; and if idle and wandering thoughts of your studies or employments, or of corporal necessities and conveniencies, or the like, stir in your mind, persist still with so much the greater fervour.

Consider 3.—Christ stood, and asked the blind man, "What wilt thou that I do to thee?" for He giveth not His

grace to us unless we will ourselves, and co-operate with it. The blind man answereth: "Lord, that I may see." Let the same be likewise your petition, "Lord, that I may see;" see You, and see myself; "enlighten my eyes, that I never sleep in death."—Ps. xii. 4. "O my God, enlighten my darkness."—Ps. xvii. 29.

THURSDAY.

THE BLIND MAN OF BETHSAIDA.

Consider 1.—Christ being come to Bethsaida, the disciples "bring to Him a blind man, and they besought Him that He would touch him. And taking the blind man by the hand, He led him out of the town:"—Mark viii. 22. —"He is blind (saith Glossa) who seeth not what he was, what he is, and what he is to be." Think whether or no you be taken with this blindness, and withal, take notice, that whosoever desireth to see aright, must permit himself to be led by our Lord "out of the town," that is, out of the noise of worldly cares, and then he will be enlightened.

Consider 2.—Christ did not presently, and by word of mouth only, give sight to this man, as He did to the former; but "spitting upon his eyes, laying His hands on him, He asked him if he saw anything." Thus God doth differently illuminate souls, some all in a moment, others by degrees; the blind man recovering sight in this manner, "saw men as it were trees, walking." For to men that are not thoroughly enlightened by divine grace, all worldly things appear greater, and in a more flourishing condition than truly they are; and men may be said to be trees, for that unless they bear fruit, they will only serve to make fuel for the fire.

Consider 3.—The blind man at last was restored to his perfect sight, "so that he saw all things clearly." Beseech our Lord so to open your eyes that you may also see things clearly, and distinguish between true and false, solid and counterfeited good. "Many things are set out in false colours, which need to be cleared, Lord, by Your divine light."—Hym. fer. 5. ad Laudes. Lastly, it was said to him, "Go into thy house." Our house and home is heaven, for, as the apostle saith, "You are fellow-citizens with the

saints, and the domestics of God."—Eph. ii. 19. Walk, therefore, as a domestic of God and son of light, lest, perhaps, "the Lord strike thee with madness and blindness and fury of mind. And mayest thou grope at mid-day as the blind is wont to grope in the dark, and not make straight thy ways."—Deut. xxviii. 28, 29.

FRIDAY.

THE LUNATIC DEVIL.—PART I.

Consider 1.—The great tyranny which the devil exerciseth upon the bodies of those whom God permits them to possess; wheresoever he seized upon this lunatic, he dashed him against the ground, made him to foam, to gnash the teeth, and to pine away—Matt. xvii. 14,—and cast him often into the fire, and as often into the water. Think if he be so outrageous in this life, where his hands are tied, how much more so will he be in hell, where, as the prophet saith, "The streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the ground thereof into brimstone: and the land thereof shall become burning pitch."—Isa. xxxiv. 9.

Consider 2.—How the devil exerciseth the like tyranny upon a soul that is subject to him. For, 1. He makes her lunatic by inconstancy. 2. Deaf to the inspirations of God, and dumb in His praises. 3. He casteth her to the ground by affection to earthly things. 4. He makes her to foam and gnash the teeth with foul and unruly language. 5. He makes her pine away by an insensibility in spiritual things. 6. He often throws her into the fire of concupiscence, and often plungeth her into the waters of fleeting pleasures, that you may learn to take heed of the "snares of the devil," of whom sinners "are held captive (as the apostle saith) at his will."—2 Tim. ii. 26.

Consider 3.—This lunatic was first presented to the disciples, who, notwithstanding, could not cure him. So we must first try human means before we recur to God for a miracle. The disciples were not permitted to cure this man, perhaps to keep them in humility. "It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me (saith David), that I may learn Thy justifications."—Ps. cxviii. 71.

SATURDAY.

THE LUNATIC DEVIL.—PART II.

Consider 1.—Christ being desired to cure this man, whom the disciples could not, He first reprehended their incredulity, "O unbelieving and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you?"—Matt. xvii. 16; Mark ix. 18. Whence you may see how hateful to God is hardness of belief. And when the possessed man was brought before Him, "immediately the spirit troubled him; and being thrown down upon the ground, he rolled about foaming." How bold is the wicked spirit, even in the presence of Christ; that you may not wonder, if perchance he tempt you in time of Mass or Communion.

Consider 2.—The power of Christ, casting the devil out by command, who, notwithstanding, had possessed this young man from his infancy, "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command thee, go out of him: and enter not any more into him." Lord, speak with the same efficacy to my soul: observe, besides, how the devil, crying out, and greatly tearing him, went out of him. While he had him, he tore him not, but when he was forced out: for he is never more spiteful to us than when we leave him.

Consider 3.—This disease was hard to be remedied, because inveterate and grown up with him from his infancy. So it is hard to rid yourself of vices that you have been long accustomed to, according to that, "A long sickness is troublesome to the physician."—Ecclus. x. 11. Besides, "This kind can go out by nothing but by prayer and fasting," that you might learn with what weapons you are to fight against the devils.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as your Soul's Friend.

"EAT, O friends, and drink, and be inebriated, my dearly beloved."—Cant. v. 1. Consider 1. What is read to-day in

the gospel: "Friend, how camest thou in hither not having on a wedding garment?"—Matt. xxii. 12. Christ most mercifully inviteth all to His friendship and desires, as much as lieth in Him, to have it with all men, and endeavour to bring Judas back into His favour, even while he was practising treason against Him, saying, "Friend, whereto art thou come?"—Matt. xxvi. 50. Ponder the greatness of this honour He does us. "We are not fit servants (saith St. Gregory), and we are styled friends." What an honour is this for miserable wretches, made of clay and dirt, to become friends of the Almighty God.

Consider 2.—This friend of yours will come to-day in the Eucharist to instruct you with His divine wisdom, to enrich you with His treasures, to defend you with His power, and to inflame you with His love, for among friends all things are in common. O, what a happy hour is this! It is said of the friendship between David and Jonathan, that "the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David."—1 Kings xviii. 1. But Christ proceeded much farther, who, that He might have the stricter union with you, would make Himself your meat and drink, that entering, in this manner, into your very bowels, "He might be joined in flesh and blood with you."—Cyril Car. 4.

Consider 3.—Your preparation for His coming must be a return of love. This it is that this loving friend requireth in every one, whence He ordained this heavenly banquet for only such as would return love for love. "Eat, O friends, and drink, and be inebriated, my dearly beloved." And to-day in the gospel, He condemned to perpetual darkness the man that came without the nuptial garment of charity. Love, therefore, and do whatsoever He shall inspire you, for "you are my friends (saith He Himself), if you do the things that I command you."—John xv. 14.

MONDAY.

THE WOMAN CURED OF AN ISSUE OF BLOOD.

Consider 1.—While Christ was going to raise one from death, "Behold a woman who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, (and who had bestowed all her substance on physicians, and could not be healed by any,) came

behind Him, and touched the hem of His garment," etc.—Matt. ix. 20; Luke viii. 43. Observe 1. The admirable humility and reverence of this woman, not presuming to come but behind Him. 2. Her confidence, saying within herself: "If I shall touch only the hem of His garment, I shall be healed." They truly suffer a spiritual issue of blood, that employ their labours and actions in vain and perishable things, they spend their substance in vain upon physicians; that is, the deceitful allurements of this life, from which they will never receive any solid profit or comfort.

Consider 2.—The woman touching Christ, received perfect health in reward of her faith. How much more might they justly hope for, who do not only touch the hem of His garment, but receive within themselves, in the Eucharist, His whole sacred and all-healing Body, if they would but come worthily to it, and like this woman. Observe, moreover, how this touch, though most secret and insensible, did not escape Christ's knowledge, that you might learn that no action of yours, though never so secret, can be kept hidden from God, "whose eyes are open upon all the ways of the children of Adam."—Jer. xxxii. 19.

Consider 3.—The multitudes did throng and press upon Christ, and yet He asketh, "Who is it that touched Me?" for the others touched Him only corporally, but this woman also spiritually, and, therefore, received cure. So, there are many that touch Christ in their actions, especially in the Eucharist, but they do it without spirit. Of such the prophet saith, "This people draw near Me with their mouth, and with their lips glorify Me, but their heart is far from Me."—Isa. xxix. 13. See whether you be not one of them.

TUESDAY.

RAISING THE RULER OF THE SYNAGOGUE'S DAUGHTER.

Consider 1.—"Behold there came a man, etc., and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at the feet of Jesus," etc.—Luke viii. 41. Observe how calamities do humble even princes, and force them to have recourse to God. Therefore David said, "It is good for me that Thou hast humbled me."—Ps. cxviii. 71. And, "I am turned in my anguish, whilst the thorn is fastened."—Ps. xxxi. 4. He

begged for his only daughter that lay dying. Your only daughter is your soul; see whether, perhaps, it be not at the last gasp, and upon the very point of deadly sin, by her over great carelessness in venial sins, and beseech our Lord to lay His hand upon her and cure her.

Consider 2.—Christ's goodness in going immediately with the prince to his house, though He could have cured her at a distance. Besides, He endeavoureth, what He can conveniently, to conceal so singular a miracle, to give us an example of humility, and, therefore, He took with Him in company only three disciples, and, withal, put the minstrels and multitude out of doors. Learn to sequester yourself from the rabble and noise of worldly thoughts, if you desire to live to Christ. Wherefore it is said in Job, "The sea saith: Wisdom is not with me."—Job xxviii. 14. And by the sea, as St. Gregory saith, is understood the life of worldlings.

Consider 3.—Christ's holding the maid's hand raised her, saying, "Maid, arise." Thus, He raiseth up the sinner, holding his hand, and directing him to good works. Then He presently bade, "that something should be given her to eat." Whence you may learn, that those who rise out of sin, must have the spiritual food of the sacraments given them, that they may not fall again. See, therefore, that you take this food often and in due manner, that you may live for ever.

WEDNESDAY.

RAISING THE WIDOW'S SON IN NAIM.—PART I.

Consider 1.—"Jesus went into a city that is called Naim," etc.; "And behold a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother," etc.—Luke vii. 11, etc. Observe, how this was a young man, in the flower of his youth, whence you may learn that no age is secure from death. Imagine Him to say unto you, "Remember my judgment; for thine also shall be so: yesterday for me, and to-day for thee."—Ecclus. xxxviii. 23. And think what would become of you, if you should die this very day; reflect also, that young men come sooner to die spiritually to God, than others more ancient. For that, as St. Jerome saith, "Youth undergoeth many conflicts of the body."—Hierom. Ep. ad Nepot.

Consider 2.—Our Lord met the corpse, not by chance, but by set purpose, and offered, of His own accord, without any entreaty, to raise the dead man, "As the eagle enticing her young to fly."—Deut. xxxii. 11. Oh, how often hath He freely offered you His assistance towards all manner of perfection, suitable to your state of life, and you would not accept it. Take heed, lest wilfully resisting and contemning the mercy He offered you, it be said of you, "I also will laugh in your destruction."—Prov. i. 26.

Consider 3.—Christ, moved with commiseration towards the widow, said to her, "Weep not," for that you shall soon be comforted. In the same manner, see you weep not, or be over concerned or grieved for temporal losses, which will soon have an end, but reserve your tears rather for the everlasting damages that proceed from your own and other's sins, for of such it is said, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."—Matt. v. 5.

THURSDAY.

RAISING THE WIDOW'S SON OF NAIM.—PART II.

Consider 1.—How Christ "came near and touched the bier. And they that carried it stood still. And He said: Young man, I say to thee, arise."—Luke vii. 14. He speaketh imperatively, to show that He is Lord of all, "Thou hast power of life and death, and leadest down to the gates of death, and bringest back again."—Wisd. xvi. 13. The death of the soul is sin, and hell its grave; for "the rich man died, and he was buried in hell."—Luke xvi. 22. The bier, whereon the sinner is carried to hell, is his body; the bearers are vicious habits; and as the bier is often set out with silk and cloth of gold, though the corpse within is full of odure; so the body of a sinner, glistening in gold apparel, covereth a soul abominable to God. But Christ cometh and toucheth the bier, that is, striketh the body with some grievous sickness, and by that means bringeth the sinner to life again.

Consider 2.—"And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And He gave him to his mother." What joy was this to his widowed mother! What an astonishment to the rest of the company. So, a sinner reviving in spirit

to God, beginneth to speak of such things as appertain to God, confessing his sins, asking pardon, and extolling so merciful a Lord.

Consider 3.—"And there came a fear on them all, and they glorified God." From so great a miracle, there arose in the standers-by a fear of offending a Lord of such power, to wit, a Lord that "killeth and maketh alive; He bringeth down to hell, and bringeth back again."—1 Kings ii. 6. Think how necessary it is for you to have this holy fear: For "the fear of the Lord hateth evil"—Prov. viii. 13—and "They that fear the Lord, will seek after the things that are well pleasing to Him."—Ecclus. ii. 19.

FRIDAY.

RAISING LAZARUS.—PART I.

Consider 1.—"There was a certain man sick named Lazarus, of Bethania," etc.—John xi. 1. Lazarus's death proceeded from a languishing disease; so likewise, from faintness and decay in spirit, if it be not cured in time, followeth the death of the soul: "When concupiscence hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin. But sin, when it is completed, begetteth death."—James i. 15. The infirmity of our nature is the incentive of sin, but this hurteth none but those that yield of themselves; for to them that resist, and fight manfully, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God; for power (or virtue) is made perfect in infirmity."—John xi. 4; 2 Cor. xii. 9.

Consider 2.—Lazarus being sick, "his sisters sent to Christ, saying, Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick." They do not prescribe what He is to do; to a loving friend it is enough to imitate one's necessities. Such ought to be our prayers, especially in matters of health, or other temporal blessing; for we know not whether or not what we ask be expedient for our soul's salvation. Besides, Christ went not presently, but deferred going for two whole days, both to exercise their faith and patience, and to render the miracle more illustrious. So, He often dealeth with you: "The labour of the combat (saith St. Gregory) is prolonged, that the crown of victory may be the greater."—Greg. xxvi. Moral. cap. 15.

Consider 3.—Some dissuaded Christ from returning into Jerusalem to cure Lazarus, for that the Jews had sought for Him to stone Him; St. Thomas answered, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him." Such ought to be the courage of an apostolical man, contemning what dangers soever, even death itself, for the good of souls, and glory of God; and such fervent acts ought you often to make, that when persecution shall arise against you, you may be able to stand in the day of battle, and not make your life more precious than yourself.—Acts xx. 24.

SATURDAY.

RAISING LAZARUS.—PART II.

Consider 1.—Christ, when He was come to "Lazarus's grave," seeing others weep, "He groaned in the spirit, and troubled Himself," etc., "and wept;" which He did, both out of charity, "weep with them that weep"—Rom. xii. 15;—and therewith to show, that "we have not a high priest, who cannot have compassion on our infirmities."—Heb. iv. 15. Then He bade them "take away the stone," "and lifting His eyes upwards," He prayed to His Father; to teach us that we are to take away all impediments of our salvation, and to implore the Divine assistance on all occasions, but chiefly in the conversion of a sinner.

Consider 2.—The stone being taken away, "He cried with a loud voice: Lazarus, come forth." Ponder the power and efficacy of His word, which even the dead obey; for presently "he that had been dead came forth, bound feet and hands with winding-bands, and his face was bound with a napkin." This man that lay four days dead in his grave, is a perfect figure of an inveterate sinner, bound and fettered with ill habits, as so many "winding-bands," muffled with the "napkin" of blindness, pressed and kept down by custom, as under a ponderous grave; and, finally, fast shut up, and inclosed, through hardness of heart, as with a grave stone; such are almost incorrigible; therefore, Christ "cried" here "with a loud voice," and doth daily call to such, and yet is not heard. Take heed of such habits and customs of sin; for, as St. Augustine saith, "He hardly riseth, that is borne down by evil custom."

Consider 3.—The Pharisees having heard of this miracle, "gathered a council," and devised to kill Jesus; whence you may learn, that there is nothing so holy, no action so good, that is not subject to envy, and harsh censures of disaffected persons.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the Worker of Miracles.

"STAND, and consider the wondrous works of God."—Job xxxvii. 14. Consider 1.—What is read to-day in the gospel: "Unless you see signs and wonders you believe not."—John iv. 48. Christ did make signs and wonders, to confirm our faith; so that by the prophet He is called by the name of "Father of the world to come."—Isa. ix. 6. Yet He never appeared more wonderful than in the Eucharist; which, that He might the more commend unto us, He would make it an abridgment of all His miracles, according to the words of the psalmist: "He hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works, being a merciful and gracious Lord: He hath given food to them that fear Him."—Ps. cx. 4, 5.

Consider 2.—In particular, some of the miracles contained in this mystery:—1. As to the substance of bread, which is wholly destroyed at the priest's words, even the *materia prima* also, and in place thereof succeedeth the glorious Body of Christ, the very same that is adored in heaven by the angels; so that there never was any so miraculous a transmutation. 2. As to the accidents, which, being separated from their substances, are preserved without any subject of adhesion, as the rays of the sun severed from it; and yet they are never the less active, and do nourish, no otherwise, than if they were inherent to their own substance. 3. As to the Body of Christ, which is here in a manner of a spirit, whole in the whole host, and whole in every part thereof; it is the self-same in several places together, indivisible, impassible, indeficient, and equally sufficient to

one and to many; truly, "there was no such work made in any kingdom."—3 Kings x. 20.

Consider 3.—The necessary preparation for receiving this miraculous food, is the fear of our Lord: "For He hath given meat to them that fear Him;" and "He that feareth God, neglecteth nothing"—Eccles. vii. 19—that is pleasing to Him; do you, therefore, the like.

HISTORICAL NARRATIONS AND PARABLES OF CHRIST.

MONDAY.

THE RICH GLUTTON AND LAZARUS.—PART I.

Consider 1.—"There was a certain rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen; and feasted sumptuously every day."—Luke xvi. 19. Observe the vices which commonly follow riches: pride in apparel, riot in feasting, contempt of the poor, and the like, that you may keep yourself from the desire of them; "For they that will become rich, fall into temptation, and into the snare of the devil."—1 Tim. vi. 9.

Consider 2.—"The rich man died: and he was buried in hell." How sad a death to so pleasant a life? But such, for the most part, is the end of riches and pleasures: "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment they go down to hell."—Job xxi. 13. Ponder his torments; for purple and fine linen, he is invested with flames; for delicious fare, he is tormented with intolerable thirst; for his contempt of the poor, he is now contemned by them; and he that denieth the crumbs of his table, cannot obtain one drop of water. Thus the punishments are proportioned to the offences: "The mighty (saith the wise man) shall be mightily tormented."—Wisd. vi. 7.

Consider 3.—The just judgment of God. The rich man is not heard in his torments, who neglecteth to do mercy in his mirth: therefore, when he begged, it was answered him, "Remember that thou didst receive good things in thy life-

time;" as if it were not lawful to receive good things here, and there too. And so it is; for "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution."—2 Tim. iii. 12. Seek not, therefore, to enjoy prosperity in this life, lest you come to miss of it in the next: "Through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God."—Acts xiv. 21.

TUESDAY.

THE RICH GLUTTON AND LAZARUS.—PART II.

Consider 1.—"There was a certain beggar named Lazarus." Christ vouchsafed to called the beggar by his name, and make him known to posterity, but not the rich man; for, as St. Gregory saith, "Our Lord acknowledgeth and approveth the humble, but the proud He knoweth not;" —Greg. Hom. xl., that you may learn to esteem virtue more than worldly riches and splendour: "The memory of the just (saith the wise man), is with praises: and the name of the wicked shall rot."—Prov. x. 7.

Consider 2.—This is the patience of the saints, whereby he arrived at such a degree of sanctity. He was, 1. "Full of sores," patiently enduring the pain proceeding from them. 2. Extremely poor, "desiring to be filled with the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table." 3. Contemned by all, "and no one did give him." 4. So miserable that he was willing to permit the dogs to lick his sores; and perhaps, by reason of his weakness, he was not able to keep them off. Who is there now-a-days, that would prefer such a one before a rich man? And yet this did Christ our Lord.

Consider 3.—The happy death of Lazarus, who was immediately "carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom." Thus, short are the tribulations of the just, but their glory is everlasting; what joys, riches, and honours, did sores, poverty, and contempt bring to this beggar! Oh! "let my soul die the death of the just, and my last end be like to them."—Num. xxiii. 10. Ponder how unequal were the lots of the rich man and of the holy Lazarus, after their death; much more, certainly, than they were in their lifetime. One was happy for a moment, but everlastingly miserable: the other miserable indeed for a while, but afterwards most happy for all eternity.

WEDNESDAY.

THE PRODIGAL SON.—PART I.

Consider 1.—"A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father: Father, give me the portion of substance that falleth to me."—Luke xv. 11, etc. God hath two sons, the just and the sinner; the just is elder, because "God made man right"—Eccles. vii. 30—in the beginning, and he always abideth in God's house; the sinner estrangeth himself from Him, and abuseth the gifts which He affordeth him, both of nature and of grace, living riotously, that is, perversely; they go into a foreign country, whosoever leave God, who is the Way: therefore David saith, "Salvation is far from sinners."

Consider 2.—The miseries this young man fell into, when he was from his father. 1. "He began to be in want." So a sinner that estrangeth himself from the sacraments, from exhortations, and from the company and example of the good, beginneth to be in want of spiritual sustenance. 2. "He cleaved to one of the citizens," as a servant; for whosoever do sin, give themselves over as slaves to the devil; and he employeth them in feeding swine, while he makes them, like to that sort of beasts, swill themselves with sensual pleasures. 3. Neither could he so satisfy his appetite, because all worldly delights cannot satiate the soul's appetite.

Consider 3.—"Returning to himself he said," etc. Being pressed with famine, he cometh to himself; because "vexation alone shall give understanding" to the sinner, and makes him think how foolishly he hath left eternal things for such as quickly pass away. "How many hired servants in my father's house abound with bread, and I here perish with hunger!" Hence he is moved to repentance; "I will arise, and will go to my father." Oh! how often have you followed this prodigal child, in going astray. Follow him, therefore, also in returning by repentance.

THURSDAY.

THE PRODIGAL SON.—PART II.

Consider 1.—The father's bowels of mercy; who "when his son was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion." So Almighty God, with the eyes of His mercy, doth look upon a sinner, being yet afar off from Him by sin; He invites him to Him by His exciting grace, saying, "Return," etc., "and I will take you."—Jer. iii. 14. And as soon as he returneth, He meets him and falls upon his neck, He embraces him, He adorns him with the first robe of justice, He puts a ring upon his hand, for the exercise of good works, and shoes upon his feet, to keep him from the dirt of worldly pleasures. O God! is it possible you should bear such love to a man made of clay, and that hath deserved a thousand times the torments of hell.

Consider 2.—The elder brother hearing of his father's joy and feasting, murmured for envy. Ponder how easy it is, even among virtuous persons, to be touched with some little envy or grudge at another's commendation or preferment; that you may so much the more carefully keep yourself from the like infection. You ought rather to wish with Moses, that all might praise and honour God: "O that all the people might prophesy, and that the Lord would give them His spirit."—Num. xi. 29.

Consider 3.—The father's mild answer, endeavouring to bring him from his error: "Son, thou art always with me, and all I have is thine;" O what a happiness it is to the just, to have God always with them! How rich must they be, that have all things common with God! Learn to rejoice when your brother is brought back again to Christ, and endeavour to bring very many to Him.

FRIDAY.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN—PART I.

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers," etc.—Luke x. 30. Consider 1. In this parable the fall of mankind in Adam: man in his first

creation, was ordained to take the course of his life from Jericho, that is, from this sublunary world (for Jericho signifieth the moon), to the heavenly Jerusalem; but he, turning his affections (which are the feet of the soul) from Jerusalem to Jericho, fell among the robbers, to wit, the devils, who robbed him of original justice, "and having wounded him, went away, leaving him half dead."

Consider 2.—The many wounds which our nature received by that first sin; they are commonly, by divines, accounted to be four in number: the first is ignorance, whereby the understanding is made destitute of that inclination which it hath to truth. The second is malice, whereby the will is disordered in the pursuance of good. The third is infirmity, whereby the irritable power is weakened in order to what is difficult. The fourth is concupiscence, whereby the desiring power is left in disorder, as to the moderate delight. See how you are maimed in all these, and have recourse to the good Samaritan for remedy; saying with the prophet, "Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved."—Jer. xvii. 14.

Consider 3.—Neither the priests nor Levites of ancient law could afford any remedy to man thus wounded. The Samaritan alone, Christ our Lord, in form of a sinner, "coming near him," by His incarnation, "bound up his wounds;" and out of the precious vessels of the sacraments, "poured in oil and wine:" and when He went to heaven, He recommended him to the care of prelates, promising them reward for the care and diligence they should use towards him. What will you return to this Samaritan, for this so great love and mercy towards you?

SATURDAY.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.—PART II.

Consider 1.—In this parable your own, and every sinner's fall; they who go down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and turn their affections from heavenly things to those of this world, do certainly fall into the hands of robbers, but not on the contrary. Ponder how this world is like to Jericho, that is, the moon for its inconstancy; and think how dangerous it is to travel in a way that is beset with

robbers; such is your journey in this life. "Because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour."—1 Peter v. 8. "He lieth in wait in secret like a lion in his den."—Ps. ix. apud Heb. x. 9.

Consider 2.—How the devil treated such passengers as deliver themselves up to him; for he can hurt none but such as choose themselves; he robbeth them of all the ornaments of grace; he striketh them with desperate wounds of vicious habits, and so leaveth them half dead; he is truly half dead that hath but one half of himself alive, who though he be well in body, yet is dead in spirit, and to God: see whether you be such; be sorry for having been so at any time, and have a care you do not any more put yourself into the hands of so cruel a tyrant.

Consider 3.—The great mercy of our Saviour, who cometh nearer the sinner, by His holy inspirations, chiefly by the Eucharist, to bind up his wounds and cure the infirmities of his soul; "The Lord shall bind up the wounds of His people; and shall heal the stroke of their wound" —Isa. xxx. 26,—said the prophet. Who would not confide in such a physician? He poureth wine and oil into the wounds, to teach us how to cure our neighbour when he sinneth: to wit, by tempering severity with mildness: so that in our correction "there be both love without remissness, and vigour without sharpness."—Greg. in Past. p. ii. c. 6.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as a Patient Creditor.

"FORGIVE us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors."—Matt. vi. 12. Consider 1.—And imagine yourself to be that servant of whom is mentioned in this day's gospel that owed his Lord "ten thousand talents"—Matt. xviii. 24;—for the debt, punishment, which the sinner oweth to God for every mortal sin, is in a manner infinite; neither is he able to make any satisfaction, although he were to be sold, and, with all that he hath, condemned to perpetual slavery; what then would become of you, if our Lord should call you

to account this very day? You are charged with a great debt, and you are not able to pay.

Consider 2.—The depth of God's goodness, who is ready to forgive more than man can possibly owe: whence He is called "rich in mercy"—Ephes. ii. 4;—"a patient rewarder"—Ecclus. v. 4;—"gracious and merciful"—Ps. cxliv. 8;—"and ready to repent of the evil"—Joel ii. 13;—and by the prophet He even provokes us, "Come, and accuse Me, saith the Lord: if your sins be as scarlet, they shall be made as white as snow," etc.—Isa. i. 18. He will come therefore, unto you, this day, in the Eucharist, which He would have to be as a sanctuary, or refuge, to all His debtors who are not able to pay; therefore, David said, "The Lord is become a refuge for the poor."—Ps. ix. 10. O how are you to wish for the coming of so good a creditor?

Consider 3.—Out of this parable, what preparation is required? 1. He is to be entreated by frequent and earnest prayer; "I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest Me." 2. With profound humility; for the servant "falling down, besought Him." 3. You are firmly to purpose amendment in life and manners; "Have patience with me, and I will pay Thee all." 4. You must forgive your brother, if you have anything against him; "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven."—Luke vi. 36, 37.

MONDAY.

THE WORKMEN IN THE VINEYARD.—PART I.

Consider 1.—"The kingdom of heaven is like to an householder," etc.—Matt. xx. 1. This householder is God Himself, who, although He is Lord of a most ample kingdom in heaven, and in earth, yet He doth so provide for each one in every particular and minute thing, as if He were master only of some little family; His vineyard is the Church, the vines are all the faithful, the workmen are all the prelates, and others that dress, prune, and spread the vines; and even the faithful themselves, who are bound to cultivate their own souls by good works: what a blessed thing it is to labour in such a vineyard, under such a Master, and about such precious vines.

Consider 2.—The solicitude of this householder, "who went out early in the morning to hire labourers," etc. From the very beginning of the world, from age to age, God ceased not to call workmen; He calleth every man betimes, even from the very first use of reason; and although most refuse to come, yet He omits not afterwards to call again, and again, not giving them over to their last gasp; some He allureth with hopes of reward; "I will give you what shall be just;" others He rebuketh for their sloth; "Why stand you here all the day idle?" See whether you have not hitherto been idle.

Consider 3.—Part of this great vineyard are all such as God hath placed under your charge, according to the state and calling you are in; but chiefly your own soul. See in what state and condition it is; examine whether it be not like to that, whereof the wise man speaketh in these words, "It was all filled with nettles; and thorns had covered the face thereof: and the stone wall was broken down."—Prov. xxiv. 31. Think therefore that you are sent into a vineyard, not into a garden of pleasure; to labour, not to sport, or live at ease; and encourage yourself to undergo great pains and labours, knowing that the reward will be answerable; and that, "the soul of them that work, shall be made fat."—Prov. xiii. 4.

TUESDAY.

THE WORKMEN IN THE VINEYARD.—PART II.

Consider 1.—"When evening was come, the Lord of the vineyard saith to His steward: Call the labourers and pay them their hire, beginning from the last," etc. This steward is Christ our Lord, whom "the Father hath given Him power to do judgment," etc.—John v. 27. The evening of our life is death; for all our whole lifetime is but as one day, and even "a thousand years in God's sight, are as yesterday, which is past."—Psal. lxxxix. 4. After death, every man receives his hire, or reward; wherein there is not so much regard had to the time, as the fervour of working; whence they that come in last in their conversion, shall receive as much as the first, because they are wont, for the most part, to labour with great fervour and humility, deeming themselves unworthy of any reward; whereas, on

the contrary, others are used to presume of themselves. See whether or no you do not the same.

Consider 2.—How the former "murmured, saying: These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, that have borne the burden of the day and the heats;" not that there will be any murmuring in heaven, but that the reward of the last comers, that work fervently, will be so great, that if the state could permit, it would breed envy in the first; it is easy to fall into the like emulation and grudge in this life. See whether your eye be not sometime "naught," or malicious, because God, or your superior is good to your brother; rather joy in his preferment; for "charity envieth not," unless it be virtues, and the "better gifts."—1 Cor. xiii. 4; xii. 31.

Consider 3.—The parable's final clause: "So shall the last be first, and first last. For many are called, but few chosen." They that come last to work, come first to be rewarded for their fervour in working; because "God regardeth not how much is done," as St. Gregory saith, "but out of what affection." Perhaps you may reckon many years of your lifetime in God's service, but few of fervour; rather procure that it may be said of you, "In a short space he fulfilled a long time."—Wisd. iv. 13.

WEDNESDAY.

THE INVITATION TO THE WEDDING AND SUPPER.—PART I.

Consider 1.—"The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who made a marriage for his son."—Matt. xxii. 2. The King is the Heavenly Father, who made a marriage between His only begotten Son and human nature, in the bed-chamber of the virgin's womb: the Son espoused to Himself the Church, in faith and charity, according to the prophet, "I will espouse thee to Me in faith: and thou shalt know that I am the Lord"—Osee ii. 20,—who also espouseth unto Himself the souls of the faithful, and that not of a few only, or of such as are noble, but generally of all, that refuse not His espousals; acknowledge therefore, my soul, your dignity, and behave yourself worthy of such a spouse.

Consider 2.—The King made a solemn wedding feast

for His Church; which He set forth with the sacraments, as so many royal courses, and inviteth all to it; but most men excuse themselves; some out of an ambitious desire of rule and command; "I have bought a farm, and I must needs go out and see it"—Luke xiv. 18,—others for their employment in worldly affairs; "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them:" some again for carnal pleasure; "I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come:" others finally, "laid hands on His servants, and having treated them contumeliously, put them to death."—Matt. xxii. 6. The same do they who wilfully reject their pious monitors, and wound and pierce them with the sword of their tongue.

Consider 3.—The madness of men, that leave this divine banquet of the heavenly King, for vile and transitory things; especially seeing that from this nuptial feast of the militant Church on earth, they are to pass to that of the triumphant in heaven; take heed you let not yourself be entangled with these snares of the world, lest you come to be shut out for ever from the heavenly banquet; "blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God."—Luke xiv. 15. Aspire, therefore, with all your endeavour, to this happiness.

THURSDAY.

THE INVITATION TO THE WEDDING AND SUPPER—PART II.

Consider 1.—"Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor and the feeble and the blind and the lame," etc.—Luke xiv. 21. The divine clemency is not lessened by man's wretchedness or ingratitude; He provideth other guests to come in their room; and instead of the rich, and voluptuous men, that excuse themselves, He calleth the poor and feeble; that is, such as are free from worldly incumbrances and impediments; He even compelleth them to enter, forcing them in a manner, by afflictions and tribulations, as so many scourges, to make them come to His supper. Admire the riches of the divine goodness, and beg of Him with the Church, that He would also propitiously force your rebellious will towards Himself.

Consider 2.—"And the King went in to see the guests: and He saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment."—Matt. xxii. 11. This wedding garment is charity, and the grace of God: wherewith whosoever is not invested, must not presume to sit at the table of the holy sacraments. Consider how God offereth this garment of charity to every one, "who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth"—1 Tim. ii. 4;—and yet men out of folly often refuse it; but do you earnestly beg it of God, and presume not to come without it, especially to the Eucharist.

Consider 3.—The King's indignation against him that had not on his wedding garment: "Bind his hands and feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness," etc. The punishment of a sinner is manifold; the first of perpetual imprisonment is hell; the second of horrid darkness, as being deprived of the sight of God; the third of obstinacy in malice, whence his hands are tied, so that he cannot work any more, and his feet shackled, that he cannot make escape. Beseech our Lord to deliver you from all these evils.

FRIDAY.

THE TEN VIRGINS.—PART I.

Consider 1.—"The kingdom of heaven be like to ten virgins," etc.—Matt. xxv. 1. In the militant Church there are both good and bad, wise and foolish; both expect the coming of Christ, the spouse, to celebrate His nuptials with the triumphant Church; they are like to the foolish virgins, that have lamps without oil, who keep their faith, but without charity, which gives it life; and what can be more foolish than to expect a Judge that seeth all things, and not to prepare yourself against His coming? See whether you are not guilty of this folly.

Consider 2.—"The bridegroom tarrying, they all slumbered and slept." By this is signified the time of our life, wherein even the good do often slumber through carelessness and negligence, though not mortal; the wicked are in a dead sleep, by an absolute forgetfulness of God; take heed even of slumbering, lest thence you come to fall fast asleep, or rather into a lethargy. Hearken to the apostle,

rousing you up in those words: "Rise thou that sleepest," etc., and "Christ shall enlighten thee."—Ephes. v. 14.

Consider 3.—"And at mid-night there was a cry made: Behold the bridegroom cometh," etc. Your Judge will come upon you on the sudden, and when you least expect, that you may learn to be always ready: "The day of the Lord shall so come (saith the apostle) as a thief in the night."—1 Thess. v. 2. If your temporal life were in danger, and you stood in fear of thieves, you would certainly keep yourself awake; and can you find in your heart to sleep, being in hazard of eternal death? Wherefore, often ring that peal in your ears: "Behold the bridegroom cometh," lest otherwise He find you at unawares. "Watch ye, therefore (saith Christ), because you know not the day nor the hour."

SATURDAY.

THE TEN VIRGINS.—PART II.

Consider 1.—"Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps," etc. At the news of death every one commonly bestirreth himself; but they that have led ill lives, find not the oil of charity in their vessels, neither will there be time then to go to the priests, and to buy it with works of penance. "They shall return at evening (saith David), and shall suffer hunger like dogs"—Ps. lviii. 7;—for then they shall be denied that spiritual food, which they neglected in their lifetime: "Therefore, whilst we have time, let us work good."—Gal. vi. 10.

Consider 2.—"They that were ready, went in with him to the marriage." Ponder of what importance it is to be ready at that hour, whereupon dependeth eternity. They entered, but with what joy and congratulating with one another, "Everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness: and sorrow and mourning shall flee away."—Isa. xxxv. 10. Their lamp there shall shine a hundred-fold, from the rays of brightness that proceed from the bridegroom's countenance, and shall send forth flames of most sincere charity, without danger of being ever extinguished. Who would not wish to enter into their company?

Consider 3.—"At last, come also the other virgins,

saying: Lord, Lord, open to us." They knocked with bare words, not with deeds; therefore, they were not let in. For, "Not every one that saith to Me, Lord, Lord," etc., "but he that doeth the will of My Father," etc., "he shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven."—Matt. vii. 21. Knock, therefore, with good works, and that while you have time, that you may be let in. Terrible are those words: "I know you not." Take heed, therefore, they may never come to be spoken to you.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the Teacher of Truth.

"DIRECT me in Thy truth, and teach me."—Ps. xxiv. 5. Consider 1.—What is said to-day in the gospel: "Master, we know that Thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth."—Matt. xxii. 16. We all live in great darkness, in this life, and we want a sure leader, that may teach us the way of God in truth; for the wise men of the world do all err: "Thy prophets have seen false and foolish things for thee"—Lam. ii. 14,—and "the children of men are liars in balances," or in their judgments; they deceive, and are deceived themselves: nor can any man safely rely upon them. Christ alone of Himself, is infallibly true; and therefore He saith, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life"—John xiv. 6;—and the apostle Paul further saith: "God is true: and every man a liar."—Rom. iii. 4.

Consider 2.—What was said to Saul, when he was out of his way: "Behold, there is a man of God in this city, a famous man: all that he saith, cometh certainly to pass. Now therefore let us go thither; perhaps he may tell us of our way, for which we are come."—1 Kings ix. 6. Apply this to the Eucharist, where the man of God truly is; yea, God Himself is truly the man, who will tell you of your way, for which you came into the world: come therefore, with a great confidence, for whatsoever He speaketh doth certainly come to pass.

Consider 3.—For a due preparation, you must bring with

you, as Saul did, some gift to present this man of God withal; "Behold we will go: but what shall we carry to the man of God?" and being poor, he gave what he had, to wit, the fourth part of a sicle of silver; and you, although you be poor, yet you have a soul, impressed as precious coin, with the image of God Himself; "The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us"—Ps. iv. 7;—therefore, as it is said to-day in the gospel, give Him this piece of coin whose image and superscription it beareth; but let it be neat, and purified from the filth of sin, and "conformable to the image of His Son"—Rom. viii. 29,—in whose likeness it was made, and then "He will teach you all truth."—John xvi. 13.

MONDAY.

THE TALENTS.—PART I.

Consider 1.—"A man going into a far country, called his servants, and delivered to them his goods."—Matt. xxv. 14. God, as the universal Lord of all, distributes His goods among men, for whatsoever we have, either in body or soul, within or without us, natural or supernatural, all is God's. O man, "What hast thou that thou hast not received?"—1 Cor. iv. 7. But God distributes His talents or gifts, whether natural or supernatural, more to one, fewer to another, at His pleasure; but He saith to all, "occupy or negociate till I come"—Luke xix. 13,—that they may make their benefit of what they receive. See how much you have received for your share, that you may be the better able to give an account.

Consider 2.—The due use of these talents. "He that had received the five talents, went his way, and traded with the same, and gained other five. And in like manner he that received the two, gained other two." Equal was the industry of both, though unequal in talents, and therefore, equal also was their reward, because God, as St. Jerome saith, "considereth not the greatness of the gain, but our good will and endeavour."—St. Jerome in Matt. xxv. Wherefore, you also, although you may think yourself to have received few talents, in comparison to others, notwithstanding may be equal to them in reward, if you be equal

with them to your proportion to the improvement of your stock.

Consider 3.—The powerful motive of reward to make us labour diligently. "Because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will place thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." But what joy, "that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard," etc.—1 Cor. ii. 9. A joy without any limit or measure, and never to have any end or abatement. Be you therefore faithful over that little which God hath bestowed upon you in wit, judgment, science, health, and the like, employing all to His glory, that you may deserve to be "placed over many things."

TUESDAY.

THE TALENTS.—PART II.

Consider 1.—"He that had received the one talent, going his way, digged into the earth, and hid his Lord's money." So many seeing themselves not able to appear exteriorly in point of science, virtue, etc., so much as others, fall into despair, give themselves over to the world, and become slothful and careless in the service of God. "The slothful hideth his hand under the arm-hole, neither doth he put it to his mouth." But such are called fools by the Divine Spirit. "The fool foldeth his hands together," etc., saying: "Better is a handful with rest, than both hands full with labour."—Eccles. iv. 5. See whether, perhaps, you do not the same.

Consider 2.—The slothful servant's excuse, "Lord, I know that Thou art a hard man," etc. He makes a lie to excuse himself, for our Lord is not hard, but gentle and good to all. The same do all slothful people, "making excuses in sins;" they fancy vain fears and dangers, saying, "There is a lion in the way, and a lioness in the roads."—Prov. xxvi. 13. Such often say, I cannot; whereas, there wants not power, but will. Have a special care of this slothful humour.

Consider 3.—This servant's doom, "Wicked and slothful servant, etc., take ye away the talent from him, etc., and the unprofitable servant cast ye out into the utter darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." He is not

damned, as St. Augustine observeth, "because he lost the talent, but because he kept it without making gain."—Aug. Serm. 10 in Joan. Use, therefore, all your endeavour to employ well the talents which God hath bestowed upon you; you cannot want employment, in what state or condition soever you live, for your own spiritual advantage, God's glory, and your neighbour's good.

WEDNESDAY.

THE VINEYARD LET OUT TO HUSBANDMEN.—PART I.

Consider 1.—"There was a man, an householder, who planted a vineyard, and made a hedge round about it," etc. —Matt. xxi. 33. God had planted a vineyard—His universal Church—and hath bestowed great care upon it. First, He hath made a hedge round about it, fencing it with excellent laws, and affording it the protection of angels, against the incursions of wild beasts and devils. Secondly, "He dug in it a press," instituting the sacraments, wherein is contained the precious blood of Christ, strained out for us through the press of the Cross, and ever flowing for the remission of our sins. Thirdly, "He built a tower," to watch in, employing His divine providence, both to protect it from the evils and to provide it with all good. How happy it is to be placed in such a vineyard, under such a guardian.

Consider 2.—Having thus appointed this vineyard, "He let it out to husbandmen," that is, to all men, that each one should labour in it, as to his part or share, to wit, his own soul, and such others as are committed to his charge: which done, "He went into a strange country," because He maketh as if He were absent, leaving us to ourselves to work freely and at our own pleasure. And, although He could have fruit from us by force, yet He expecteth with patience. Who then would not admire and love so great a goodness?

Consider 3.—Almighty God, to put these husbandmen in mind of their duty, sent them, from time to time, patriarchs, prophets, and priests; but all in vain. Lastly, He sent also His own Son, but Him likewise they killed. Justly, therefore, He complaineth by His prophet: "What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard that I have not

done to it."—Isa. v. 4. Whence, with good reason, it is said, "The naughty men He will bring to nought." See that the same sentence may not also light upon you, and procure to yield fruit answerable to the tenure which you hold.

THURSDAY.

THE VINEYARD LET OUT TO HUSBANDMEN.—PART II.

Consider 1.—The vineyard is also the soul of every man, and yours in particular, which the supreme householder hath furnished with hedge, press, and tower, that is, with all necessaries both for your security and convenience of yielding fruit in all manner of virtue. Look well into yourself, and you will find that you are a "chosen vineyard"—Jer. ii. 21,—of which the prophet speaketh, so that it may be also said of you, "What is there that I ought to do more to My vineyard that I have not done to it?—Isa. v. 4.

Consider 2.—God doth let out this soul of yours to yourself, for He reserves the property to Himself: "All souls are Mine," etc.—Ezech. xviii. 4. And "I am the Lord, and there is none else."—Isa. xlv. 5. He lets you, therefore, to yourself, that you should cultivate your own soul, like a good husbandman, and render it fruitful for His service. For, "who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof?"—1 Cor. ix. 7. Therefore, our Lord likewise expecteth fruit from you. But He goeth into a foreign country, appearing as if He were absent, and leaving you to your own liberty, to do as you please yourself. But woe be to that vine which bringeth forth no fruit, for one of these two is due to every vine, "fruit or fire." Therefore, that you may not be in fire, be not without fruit.

Consider 3.—God doth often send to you His servants, preachers, superiors, and others, to put you in mind of your duty. He sendeth also His only begotten Son, by interior inspirations, and the example of His life and passion. Take heed, therefore, that you do not, like those wicked husbandmen, either contemn God's officers, or kill His Son again by sin, lest, otherwise, the kingdom of God be taken from you and given to another, that "will render Him fruit in its season."

FRIDAY.

THE UNJUST STEWARD.

Consider 1.—"There was a certain rich man who had a steward: and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods," etc.—Luke xvi. The rich man is God, for, "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." You are His steward, whom God hath entrusted with many goods both of body and mind, natural and supernatural, that you might employ them well; but by your misdemeanours, you gained the report of an ill husbandman, and are reputed as a waster of your Lord's goods. What a shameful and opprobrious thing it is to play the cheat with God, and turn bankrupt to heaven.

Consider 2.—"Give an account of thy stewardship," etc. When you come to die, there will be demanded a most strict account of your stewardship; that is, of your life and actions, and then you can play the steward; that is, work your salvation no longer. "The night cometh when no man can work."—John ix. 4. Wherefore, let us do good while we have time. Wise stewards often look into their accounts, to see how things go, that they may be found faithful when they shall be called to an account. Do you the same, by a daily and rigorous examination of your conscience, for, "if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."—1 Cor. xi. 31.

Consider 3.—How the steward in this parable provided wisely for himself, although deceitfully, and, therefore, Christ commended not his fraud, but his wit and forecast. Oh, that we were so wise and provident in procuring the eternal salvation of our soul! Lament that "the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light;" and think how you may bestir yourself. The true "wise man is wise to his own soul."—Ecclus. xxxvii. 25.

SATURDAY.

THE WISE MAN AND THE FOOL.

Consider 1.—Christ pronounceth him a wise man, who, building his house, layeth the foundation upon a firm rock

—Matt. vii. 24,—whence it comes to stand immovable against all winds and floods whatsoever. The rock is Christ, who is called the "chief corner-stone."—Ephes. ii. 20. The winds, floods, and rains are the several temptations man is assaulted with. He, therefore, buildeth upon a rock that groundeth his life and actions upon Christ, and reasons of eternity, and thereby is secured from all temptations, for "God is in the midst thereof," and, therefore, "he shall not be moved."—Ps. xlv. 6. See whether you do so or no.

Consider 2.—He is called a fool that buildeth his house upon sand. For what can be greater folly than to be at great expense in raising a building that is ready to fall to the ground by every wind? By the sand, is understood all earthly things; and he buildeth upon sand that placeth his thoughts and labours upon the fleeting and transitory things of this life, whence he cometh to be tossed up and down by the winds of vanity, carried away and swallowed up by the floods of pleasure, and even quite overwhelmed with the rains and storms of adversity, which God useth to send. Therefore, the prophet compareth the wicked "like the dust which the wind driveth from the face of the earth."—Ps. i. 4.

Consider 3.—How all men scorn the name, but most hesitate not to do the action of a fool. Therefore, Solomon saith, "The number of fools is infinite"—Eccles. i. 15,—because an infinity of men build upon sand. See whether you do not make one of the number, and observe, that the winds and rains were common to both the houses, so temptations do equally assault the just and the wicked. And, therefore, if you fall at any time, ascribe not the cause thereof to the temptations, but the folly of an ill will and groundless foundation.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

HOLY COMMUNION.

Consider Christ as the Salvation of your Soul.

"ATTEND unto my help, O Lord, the God of my salvation."—Ps. xxxvii. 23. Consider 1.—What is read to-day in the

gospel, how Christ raised the deceased daughter of the ruler of the synagogue, and healed the hemorrhage of an issue of blood.—Matt. ix. 18; Mark v. 22; Luke viii. 41. And, lastly, how He used to bestow perfect health to all that came to Him: "For virtue went out from Him, and healed all."—Luke vi. 19. Therefore, David saith, "The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?"—Ps. xxvi. 1. How secure is he that hath God for his Saviour and Defender?

Consider 2.—This same Lord will come unto you to-day in the Eucharist. Oh, what a happiness is this! Look thoroughly into yourself, and think what infirmities you are most subject unto, and how you are assaulted by your enemies. Perhaps, you will find your soul, if not quite dead by mortal sin, at least, next door to it, by a lingering consumption of tepidity. You will find her, perchance, to have an issue of blood, while she letteth the best part of her life and actions pass from her unprofitably. Wherefore, have recourse unto the Lord and God of your salvation, that He may say likewise to your soul, "I am thy salvation."—Ps. xxxiv. 3.

Consider 3.—The preparation you are to make out of the gospel:—1. By a most profound humility, imitating this prince, who "came up and adored Him;" and the woman who "came behind Him, and touched the hem of His garment." 2. By a great confidence; therefore, Christ said to the woman, "Thy faith hath made thee whole." And by the prophet He saith, "Thy life shall be saved for thee, because thou hast put thy trust in Me."—Jer. xxxix. 18.

MONDAY.

PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

Consider 1.—"The sower went forth to sow his seed," etc.—Matt. xiii. 3; Mark iv. 3; Luke viii. 5. Ponder the infinite mercy of God; He standeth not in need of any fruit that we can yield Him, and yet He vouchsafeth most graciously to go forth sundry ways, by preachers, by spiritual books, by holy inspirations, by superiors, by directors, by examples, etc., to sow in our hearts the seed of eternal salvation: "Behold I sow My law in you, and it

shall bring forth fruit in you." Think what a precious seed this is, whose fruit is life everlasting.

Consider 2.—The earth whereon this seed is cast is man's heart. But there are three sorts of soil, wherein this seed bringeth forth no fruit:—1. In the public highway; that is, in an open heart, exposed to all manner of distracting thoughts. 2. In a stony soil; that is, in a hard heart, without any moisture of devotion. 3. In a field full of thorns and briars; that is, in a heart choked up with the cares, pleasures, and riches of this life. See whether the soil of your heart be not such in one kind or other, and endeavour to rid it of all these impediments.

Consider 3.—The property of a good soil, or heart, is to retain the seed, and yield fruit in patience. It is not enough to receive holy inspirations, unless you endeavour to retain them; for, "whosoever retains not his meat (saith St. Gregory), his life is certainly in danger." Moreover, the field of your heart must be patient, not only in suffering the plough, that is, afflictions, but also expecting with patience the heavenly dew and showers of divine grace, for, "in your patience, you shall possess your souls." —Luke xxi. 19.

TUESDAY.

THE COCKLE AMONG THE WHEAT.

Consider 1.—"The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field," etc.—Matt. xiii. 24. By Christ's own exposition, the sower in this parable is God; the field, this world; the good seed, the just; the cockle, the wicked; the enemy, the devil; the harvest, the end of the world; and the reapers, the angels. God, for His part, would have all men good, and for this only purpose giveth His seed; but while men sleep, and are careless in the affairs of their salvation, the devil oversoweth cockle, and of good makes them wicked. The cockle groweth together with the wheat, and is hardly distinguished from it in the blade; so the wicked oftentimes are scarcely discerned from the good in this life.—See whether you be wheat or cockle; and whether you sleep in the main business of your salvation, lest you come to be overcome by the enemy.

Consider 2.—The indiscreet zeal sometimes of the just, that wish all the wicked to be rooted up. "Wilt Thou that we go, and gather it up?" But God doth not so, "who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad"—Matt. v. 45;—for He tolerates the bad, expecting them to do penance, that so from being cockle, they may turn to be good wheat; and for that cause will not have them all rooted up. Put on the like affection of long-suffering toward your brethren and neighbours that are troublesome to you.

Consider 3.—The great difference in the end of this common life, which the good and the bad lead in this world; "Gather up first the cockle," etc., "to burn, but the wheat gather ye into My barn:" who would not choose rather to be in this barn, than in a burning furnace. See, therefore, you be good wheat, and suffer yourself to be threshed, and cleansed from chaff, by penance and mortification; for you cannot be brought into the heavenly granary together with it.

WEDNESDAY.

THE MUSTARD SEED.

Consider 1.—"The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed," etc.—Matt. xiii. 31; Mark iv. 31; Luke xiii. 19. Christ Himself was this mustard-seed; because, as that seed is the least, and commendable neither for its smell nor outward show, yet it contains within itself a great natural heat, and sends it forth also outwardly, especially when it is bruised; so Christ to the outward appearance, was "a worm, and no man," etc.—Ps. xxi. 7,—but within Him were "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" of God—Colos. ii. 3;—and being broken and bruised on the cross, He expressed the greatest heat of love that ever was, inflaming the whole world with the fire of His charity. Do thou likewise, suffer yourself to be set on fire with the like heat.

Consider 2.—All the just in this life are also mustard-seed; simple and contemptible in the eyes of the world, but in a high value with God and His angels; so that the wicked shall say in the day of judgment, "We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour. Behold,

how they are numbered among the children of God."—Wisd. v. 4, 5. Observe, moreover, that the saints do then show their virtue most, when they are crushed with tribulations; whence the apostle, "When I am weak, then am I powerful," etc.—2 Cor. xii. 10.

Consider 3.—A grain of mustard-seed cast into the earth, groweth into a tree, "so that the birds of the air come, and dwell in the branches thereof." Such a grain is Christ, perfectly mortified, and dead upon the cross, in whose branches, that is, doctrine and example, devout souls dwell by contemplation; "I sat down under His shadow, whom I desired," saith the spouse in the Canticles: "and His fruit was sweet to my palate."—Cant. ii. 3. Do you the like.

THURSDAY.

THE LEAVEN.

Consider 1.—"The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal," etc.—Matt. xiii. 33; Luke xiii. 21; that is, she wrought it into the whole quantity of bread, so as to give it its relish. This leaven first was Christ, who being hid in our flesh, rendered the cursed mass of mankind acceptable to God. Again, He is, after a special manner, leaven in the Eucharist, whereby penetrating into our heart, He leaveneth, seasoneth, and in a manner edifieth the whole man, giving chastity to the body, and the savour of all virtue to the soul.

Consider 2.—Good leaven, likewise, are the good that live in communities; for an exemplary life hath a wonderful influence upon men's actions, and after a secret manner provoking others to their imitation, making them like to those in whom they behold it; whence the apostle writes to Timothy, "Be thou an example of the faithful, in word in conversation, in charity," etc.—1 Tim. iv. 12,—because, as St. Leo saith, "Examples are more powerful than words, and it is a more perfect way of teaching in action, than by word of mouth."—Leo. Serm. i. de St. Laurent.

Consider 3.—On the contrary, the power of bad leaven, because it spoileth the whole baking; whence the apostle saith, "That a little leaven corrupteth the whole lump."—1 Cor. v. 6. Even so bad example infecteth them with

whom we live and converse; in which respect we ought to be very cautious, lest we make other men's sins our own; for that they often take their beginning from ours. Look, therefore, well about yourself, and see whether you are wont to give others bad example in any kind; for "woe to that man by whom the scandal cometh."—Matt. xviii. 7.

FRIDAY.

THE TREASURE HID IN THE FIELD.

Consider 1.—"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in a field."—Matthew xiii. 44. "This treasure (saith St. Gregory) is the desire of heaven, or love of virtue and heavenly things, and it is said to be hidden in the field of this world; for that all know not the value of it."—Greg. Hom. xi. in Evang. "Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to little ones"—Matt. xi. 25;—whence it is, that most men abhor humility and poverty as vile and contemptible things. Beseech our Lord so to open your eyes, that you may be able to discover this treasure.

Consider 2.—How this treasure is to be kept. "Which a man having found, hid it," saith Christ. We must, therefore, lay it up closely in our hearts, and cover it with the veil of humility, from the praises of men and vainglory, lest, thereby, it come to be taken from us, and vanish away. Examine yourself whether you do so, or whether you do not rather vainly boast and brag at every turn, for what you think yourself to have. Our way to heaven is beset with many thieves, and "he desires to be robbed (saith St. Gregory), that carrieth his treasure in open view."—Greg. *sup.* Hide it, therefore, where you can, that so you may keep it long.

Consider 3.—This treasure cannot be otherwise obtained than by buying it, and that with the sale, not of some one or more things, but of all whatsoever we have: "He goeth and selleth all that he hath," and buyeth it. And Christ, in another place, pronounceth, "Every one of you that doth not renounce all that he possesseth, cannot be My disciple."—Luke xiv. 33. We must, therefore, leave all things of this world, at least in affection, to attain to a perfect enjoy-

ment of Christ; and think that well left, for which we gain a hundred-fold, and that more than a hundred times over.

SATURDAY.

THE PEARL.

Consider 1.—"The kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls."—Matt. xiii. 45. We are all merchants in this life; therefore Christ, in the parable of the talents, said, "Trade till I come"—Luke xix. 13,—that is, to judgment. All men, indeed, seek pearls, but some take them for temporal enjoyments, others for learning and sciences, others again for honours; but they are all mistaken. These are false pearls, nor have they anything that is good in them, but an outward show; therefore the apostle saith to the rich, "Your riches are corrupted, your gold and silver is cankered."—James v. 2, 3. See whether you do not desire such kind of pearl.

Consider 2.—"And having found one precious pearl," etc., for there is only one true precious pearl, Christ our Lord, and the love of heavenly things; "All gold in comparison of her is as a little sand: and silver in respect to her shall be counted as clay."—Wisd. vii. 9. There is no comparison between heaven and earth, one single drop of water and the whole ocean, time and eternity; no more is there between Christ and all earthly goods whatsoever; and yet as often as you sin, you renounce Christ for some base thing or other.

Consider 3.—Here again it is said, that this pearl is not to be bought without selling all we have: "He went his way, and sold all that he had, and bought it." But "happy is he (saith St. Gregory) who, with all his fortunes, is able to buy Christ."—St. Greg. Naz. Therefore the apostle saith, "I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but as dung, that I may gain Christ."—Phil. iii. 8. Think with yourself whether you do so, and what kind of merchant you are.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

HOLY COMMUNION.

When the twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost comes before the month of November, as it falls out when there are twenty-eight Sundays, then in the twenty-fourth is read the Mass and Gospel of the third Sunday, which was remaining after the Epiphany, to wit, that of the Leper, and the Centurion (*Matt.* viii.) Wherefore, then, you shall take the Meditation which is for the third Sunday after Epiphany, and consider Christ as the Physician of your soul; as is set down there, page 86.

MONDAY.

THE LOST SHEEP.

Consider 1.—"What man of you that hath an hundred sheep," etc.—Luke xv. 4. This man is Christ; the sheep are the faithful. Christ performeth to the utmost all the offices of a good shepherd; He came down from heaven to feed them; He marks them for His own with a divine character; He leads them by the example of His virtues; He cures them of the infection of sin; He defends them from the infernal wolves; He provides them rich pastures of His doctrine and sacraments; and, which is incomparably more, He gives them His body and blood, for meat and drink; the faithful hear His voice, obey His commands, follow Him wherever He leadeth; they delight in His pastures, and yield Him both the wool of their exterior actions, and milk of their interior; and even their blood and life, and all, whenever there is any necessity of dying for Him.

Consider 2.—The strayed sheep is a sinner, who, leaving the company of the just, and obedience to his pastor, goeth his own ways: nothing is more foolish and miserable than he; he feels not the happiness he enjoyeth under his pastor; he careth not for spiritual pastures; he prefers such as are more pleasing to flesh and blood; he follows Him not, nor hears His call; he esteems the ways of the cross and of mortification to be too rough, and chooses rather to trace the craggy and dangerous ways of his own will. "All we like sheep have gone astray (saith the

prophet), every one hath turned aside into his own way." —Isa. liii. 6. Think how often you have done so.

Consider 3.—The great goodness of this pastor. He seeketh after His strayed sheep: first, by Himself, while He was in mortal flesh, by His exemplary life and doctrine for thirty-three years; afterwards by superiors and directors, by holy inspirations, by pious books, and other means, never ceasing even to the end of the world; and having found it, most gently and lovingly takes it up. O Lord, so take and receive me! "I have strayed as a sheep that is lost; seek Thy servant, because I have not forgotten Thy commandment."

TUESDAY.

THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN.

Consider 1.—"Two men went up into the temple to pray," etc.—Luke xviii. 10. Ponder the effects of pride in the Pharisee: 1. Because he thought himself perfect, he asketh nothing, neither pardon of sins, nor the gifts of grace. 2. Under the pretence of thanksgiving, he commends himself for his own good works. 3. He arrogantly prefers himself before others. 4. He contemns the publican, whom he rashly judgeth a sinner. Thus, all proud men are blind, and say, "I am rich, and have need of nothing;" but, alas! "thou knowest not," thou proud fool, "that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," etc.—Apoc. iii. 17.

Consider 2.—The publican's humility, 1. He stands afar off, deeming himself unworthy to approach near to God, or even the Pharisee. 2. He dares not so much as lift up his eyes out of confusion for his sins. 3. He strikes his breast with a contrite heart, and is desirous to make satisfaction. 4. He humbly beggeth for pardon, saying, "O God, be merciful to me a sinner." Such, likewise, ought to be your prayer; humble, contrite, and accompanied with resolution of amendment.

Consider 3.—Christ's sentence of both these men: "This man went down into his house justified rather than the other," etc. Thus, pride destroyed even those good works that were in the Pharisee; humility, on the other side, by the help of penance, blotted out sin in the publican. So,

"every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted;" as it often falleth out even in this life, but most certainly in the next. Think, therefore, with yourself, where you will choose to be humbled —here or there.

WEDNESDAY.

THE FAITHFUL AND WISE STEWARD.

Consider 1.—"Who (thinkest thou) is the faithful and wise steward," etc.—Luke xii. 42. Our Lord finds few such; therefore, He speaketh of them in an admiring way. That which He requireth of His servants is: 1. That they be faithful. 2. Prudent. 3. Good to others. 4. Persevering, that when our Lord shall come at the hour of death, "He may find them so doing." See how you behave yourself in these points; whether you do faithfully and to your utmost promote God's cause, or not rather your own interests; whether you do your actions with due circumspection and deliberation; whether you seek to benefit others according to your ability; and, lastly, how firm and content you are in good purposes.

Consider 2.—The evil conditions of the bad servants: 1. He saith in his heart, "My lord is long a-coming;" and thinks he has a long time yet to live, as did that other, who said to his soul, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years," etc.—Luke xii. 19. 2. He is injurious to others, "striking the servants and hand-maids." 3. He gives himself over to carnal pleasures, beginning "to eat and drink." Have a care you keep yourself from these vices, and observe that the beginning of all these mischiefs is a persuasion of long life and forgetfulness of what is to befal us in the end.

Consider 3.—The reward and punishment of both these servants. Of the former it is said: "Blessed is that servant," etc., "He will set him over all that He possesseth," to wit, in heaven; but of the latter it is said, "The Lord of that servant will come in the day that he hopeth not, and at the hour that he knoweth not, and shall separate him," to wit, from the company of the just, "and shall appoint him his portion with unbelievers," in hell. Imitate, therefore, the first, lest your portion and lot come to be with the last, etc.

THURSDAY.

GIRDING THE LOINS.

Consider 1.—"Let your loins be girt, and lamps burning in your hands, and you yourselves like to men who wait for their Lord, when he shall return from the wedding."—Luke xii. 35. Ponder how carefully servants watch for their master's coming from a marriage feast. Such would Christ have us to be against His coming: "We gird our loins (saith St. Gregory) when we restrain luxury by continency; and we hold burning candles in our hands, when, by good works, we show our neighbours the light of our example."—Greg. Hom. xiii. in Evang. See how you perform both these duties.

Consider 2.—"That when he cometh, and knocketh, they may open to him immediately." Our Lord cometh, when He hasteneth to judge us, at our death; He knocketh when He sendeth us sickness; the good, at that time, without delay and with great joy, open unto Him, "having a desire (with the apostle) to be dissolved and to be with Christ."—Phil. i. 23. On the contrary, with what an unwilling and heavy heart do the wicked let Him in when He knocketh; therefore, in Ecclesiasticus it is said: "O death! how bitter is the remembrance of thee to a man that hath peace in his possessions."—Ecclus. xli. 1.

Consider 3.—"If the householder did know at what hour the thief would come, he would surely watch, and would not suffer his house to be broken open." Death will most certainly come upon us as a thief, and break open the house, or habitation of our body; but what day or hour it will come is as uncertain. Therefore, our Lord would have us to be watchful, every hour of our life, that we may not be caught unawares, in that moment wherein is turned the die of our everlasting doom.

FRIDAY.

THE VINE AND ITS BRANCHES.

Consider 1.—"I am the vine; you the branches."—John xv. 5. Christ is truly a vine, in regard of that most precious

wine which He poured forth on the Cross, and is daily presented to us in the chalice; whosoever will themselves, may be the branches of this vine; therefore He inviteth all; and of this vine it is said, "It stretched forth its branches unto the sea, and its boughs unto the river"—Ps. lxxix. 12; for He quickeneth us all, as so many branches, with the sap of His grace, and with the same nourisheth us, and maketh us rich and full of excellent fruit. Oh! how well it is with the branch that remaineth and liveth in such a vine.

Consider 2.—An evident sign of remaining in this vine is fruitfulness: "He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit." Wherefore, by the fruit you bear, you may gather whether you remain in Him or no; besides, "every branch that beareth fruit," the Heavenly Father "will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit." The vine-dresser purgeth the branches by pruning and incision. So God doth those that are His by afflictions, sicknesses, and temptations; that you might learn to take these things willingly at the hands of God, as helps towards your spiritual profit.

Consider 3.—What becometh of the branch that beareth not any fruit: "He shall wither, and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire, and he burneth." "One of the two (saith St. Augustine) appertaineth to the branch, fruit or fire."—Aug. Tr. lxxxi. in Joan. Procure, therefore, to bring forth fruit, and that in due season; sweet and not wild grapes; lest otherwise, like a dry withered branch cut off from the vine, you become fuel for that fire which can never be quenched.

SATURDAY.

THE BARREN FIG-TREE.

Consider 1.—"A certain man had a fig-tree planted in His vineyard, and He came seeking fruit on it, and found none," etc.—Luke xiii. 6. This fig-tree is every Christian, planted by God's own hand in the vineyard of His Church, to bring forth fruit of good works; this tree God doth cherish with the warm sun, and water with the showers of His grace: and if that suffice not, He forceth it in a manner to good, by digging and laying manure about it; and if, after all this, it will not yield fruit, He bids it to be cut down,

and cast into the fire; for "every tree that doth not yield good fruit shall be cut down, and cast into the fire."—Matt. iii. 10.

Consider 2.—And apply all this to your own soul, which the Heavenly Husbandman hath planted as a choice sprig in the vineyard of His Church, exposed to the open sun of His divine illuminations, often watered with the showers of His grace, and finally provided with all necessaries to bring forth plenty of fruit; and yet, perhaps, He may justly say of you, Behold, it is now so many "years since I come seeking fruit upon this fig-tree, and I find none," that is, I find not fruit answerable to My labour and expectation; what then?

Consider 3.—"Let it alone this year also," etc. Who knoweth whether God hath not prefixed this year as your last, in hopes of greater fruit; so that hereafter He will not afford you so many helps of His grace. God oftentimes giveth us time to do penance—Apoc. ii. 21,—but if we use it not, He closeth His hand, and, as it is said in the Apocalypse, "that time shall be no longer"—Apoc. x. 6,—that is, of such abundant helps, without which we shall not be able to work; therefore, make good use of the time allowed you, and endeavour to produce good fruit, and not leaves only.

MEDITATIONS ON THE SAINTS.

THE EXCELLENCY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY ABOVE ALL CREATURES.

Consider 1.—With what pomp and state of plate, perfumes, tapestry, and other rich furniture, worldly princes are wont to set forth their bed-chamber, and rooms of presence; how much more fitting was it that the King of Heaven should adorn the cabin, wherein He was not only to abide for some time, but of which He decreed to frame Himself a body. To be Mother of God is the greatest dignity that can possibly be communicated to a pure creature: to her, therefore, is due all manner of grace, and ornaments, which, by the ordinary power of God, may be conferred upon any pure creature; therefore St. Anselm: "It was fitting that the Virgin should be adorned with that purity, than which no greater, under God, could be conceived."—St. Ansel. 1. de Concep. V. c. viii.

Consider 2.—Hence it followeth, that whatsoever internal grace and virtue was bestowed upon any saint, the same, in a much more perfect manner, was conferred upon the Blessed Virgin; and which is more, divers authors affirm, that her grace and glory alone, did surpass that of all other saints put together—Suar. iii. p. 1. sec. 4. Barrad. c. i. lib. 6;—for it is fit that a King of infinite power and riches should bestow more upon His Mother than all His servants besides; therefore, it is said in the Canticles, "Thou art beautiful, O my love, sweet and comely as Jerusalem"—Cant. vi. 3;—that is, as the whole city of Heaven. And St. Bernard: "To others (saith he) grace is imparted by parcels, but upon Mary the whole fulness thereof was poured forth."—St. Bern. g. Serm. Signum magnum.

Consider 3.—What reverence, confidence, and love, you ought hence to have towards this sacred Virgin; reverence, for the excellence of her dignity; confidence, for the greatness of her goodness; love, for the tender bowels of her charity towards God: for she vouchsafeth to be a mother

to us all; and the greater she is, the more tender she is of us; what might you not hope for, if you had a mother that were empress of the world? Love, therefore, that you may deserve to be loved and protected by so powerful a lady.

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

"THE work is great; for a house is prepared not for man, but for God."—1 Paral. xxix. 1. Consider 1.—It was not fitting that the Mother of God should for any one moment be slave of the devil; and if the ark of God and the tabernacle were to be made of the setim wood, which would not rot, much more the living ark and tabernacle of God ought to be preserved from all corruption; therefore, "the Most High hath sanctified His own tabernacle"—Ps. xlv. 5:—so that from the very first instant, wherein her blessed soul was united to her body, in her mother's womb, it was ever true to say, "Thou art all fair, O my love; and there is not a spot in thee."—Cant. iv. 7.

Consider 2.—She was not barely preserved from all stain and blemish, by the infusion of grace; but besides, she received such plenty of habitual grace, and all manner of virtue, together with the suppression of evil desire, and use of reason, that even then she surpassed the greatest saints; therefore, it is said of her, "Glorious things are said of thee, O city of God."—Ps. lxxxvi. 3. And what are these glorious things? "The foundations thereof in the holy mountains;" for that the foundations, or beginnings of all other men, are laid in original sin; but the foundations of the Blessed Virgin were holy and equal to the very top of other saints' perfections; and if the very ground-work were such, what do you think was the height of sanctity she arrived unto at her death? By continual increase and addition, proceeding from the exercise of most intense acts of virtue.

Consider 3.—How much you ought to rejoice for the Immaculate Conception of her that was likewise to be your mother. Do you also procure this day, to be spiritually conceived to God without spot, and so ever after to remain. Rejoice that you are to feed in the Eucharist, on the very same flesh which the Son of God took from His Virgin Mother, and endeavour to come without the least spot, to the spotless Lamb of the Immaculate Virgin.

THE NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

"WHO is she that cometh forth as the morning rising?" Cant. vi. 9. Consider 1.—How true is that saying of the Church: "Your nativity, O Mother of God, hath brought joyful tidings to the whole world," etc.—Antiph. ad Magnif. For, 1. The Blessed Trinity rejoiced, as for the coadjutrix of the Incarnation. 2. The angels for their Queen. 3. The fathers in Limbo for the Mother of their Deliverer. 4. The just also in this world, God infusing an extraordinary kind of joy into their souls, though themselves, perhaps, knew not the cause thereof, as often happeneth; the whole world is exhilarated at the break of day, as the forerunner of the sun rising; Mary was the bright morning, that brought the happy tidings of the Sun of Justice; reverence, therefore, and honour her birth; and, full of admiration, inquire diligently "who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising?"

Consider 2.—The Virgin being born, her name was called Mary, and that, no doubt, by Divine instinct, and, perhaps, also by express intimation of an angel; for Mary signifieth—1. A sea star. 2. A bitter sea. 3. Lady, or exalted. 4. Enlightened, or enlightening; for she is indeed, 1. A bright star to them that sail in the dangerous sea of this world. 2. A large sea, of all manner of grace, sweet to men, but bitter to the devils; and in her Son's Passion, she was an ocean of grief. 3. Lady of the whole world, and "exalted to the heavenly kingdom, above the choirs of angels."—In Offic. B. Virg. 4. Enlightened first in herself, she enlightened the world, "bringing forth to the world the Eternal Light, Jesus Christ our Lord."—In Præf. Miss. de B. Virg. O Mary, "thy name is as oil poured out"—Cant. i. 2,—illuminating, healing, and comforting our souls.

Consider 3.—In imitation of this Virgin, your mother, you must be born spiritually to God: to be born in flesh is not in man's power, neither is it where, or when he will; but it is in our hands to be born in spirit, by the Divine grace. Let this, therefore, be your birth-day to God, and endeavour hereafter to demean yourself worthily as His child: "Whosoever is born of God, committeth not sin."—1 John iii. 9. Therefore fly sin, that you may ever remain the son of God.

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

(*For the Annunciation, see p.* 40; *Visitation, see p.* 47; *and Purification, see p.* 80.)

"WHO is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights?"—Cant. viii. 5. Consider 1.—The Blessed Virgin, though she were free from sin, yet was not so from death, from which Christ Himself would not be exempted; therefore, the end of her life now drawing nigh, and being admonished by an angel of the time of her departure, as authors relate,—Metaphr. Niceph, etc., apud Barrad. to l. l. vi. c. 11,—think with what ardent affection she disposed herself by intense acts of love, saying with the spouse in the Canticles, "I languish with love"—Cant. v. 8,—and with David, "Bring my soul out of prison."—Ps. cxli. 8. And how, at last, the apostles being all about her, she breathed forth her blessed soul into the hands of her Son, who was there present, and invited her to His glory: "O my soul, die the death of the just," and let my last end be made like to hers.

Consider 2.—How, that the blessed soul, released from her body, was led by her Son into Heaven, environed with angels, singing forth those notes of admiration: "Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, leaning upon her beloved?"—Cant. viii. 5. See how she, being now entered into the empyreal heaven, is welcomed by the Eternal Father, and the whole Blessed Trinity, and a sovereign queen, seated in a throne of glory, above all creatures: for, "A throne was set for the King's Mother: and she sat on His right hand."—3 Kings ii. 19. The measure of her glory was proportioned to the greatness of her love and charity, that you might also learn to be fervent in your love to God.

Consider 3.—How, after three days lying in the grave, the blessed body was united again to the soul, and with unspeakable pomp assumed into Heaven, accompanied with the angels and the whole celestial court, and Christ Himself her Son.—Juvenal and St. Damasc. aliique apud Barrad. O what a triumph—what a glory was this! Do you likewise ascend in spirit with your mother and say to her, "Draw me, we will run after thee"—Cant i. 3,—now in

affection, afterwards in the happy enjoyment of your company. Rejoice that you are to receive this day a pledge of her in the Eucharist, for in the Son's body still remains, in a manner, the mother's flesh and blood, and endeavour to come with due preparation.

THE ANGELS.—PART I.

That you may be the more stirred up to the veneration of the holy angels, consider their natural excellencies; they are by nature, 1. Most noble and pure spirits, most absolute in themselves, without being joined with flesh or any corporeal substance. 2. Immortal, and incapable of any decay or corruption. 3. Of most sublime wit and understanding, comprehending by an intuitive knowledge all natural objects. 4. Of most perfect free will, subject to no one but its Creator, and inseparably fixed upon its supreme good, which it hath once possessed. 5. In power inferior to none but Divine, and superior to all that is created.

Consider 2.—Their supernatural endowments. 1. Of grace; for "in them (as St. Augustine saith) God at once created nature and infused grace"—Aug. lib. xii. de Civ. c. 9,—together with all manner of virtue, and that in an eminent degree, whereby in a moment they merited their eternal happiness. 2. Of glory whereby they are in perpetual possession and enjoyment of their supreme good, whence proceed all their other prerogatives, as of being peers and princes of Heaven, domestics, familiars and favourites of God, continually assisting at His throne, and beholding His divine countenance.

Consider 3.—These blessed spirits, though never out of the centre of their happiness, have a larger sphere than the empyreal heaven; for they are the movers of the other celestial orbs, and immediately under God, do rule and govern the whole universe: they are over kings, princes, states, and magistrates, they defend us from evils, they intercede for us, and present our prayers to God; they enlighten our understanding and inflame our will towards God and heavenly things, etc. Admire and love the perfections of these spirits; implore their assistance, and endeavour by purity of life and promptness in the Divine service to become partner with them in glory.

THE ANGELS.—PART II.

Consider 1.—The holy angels, though in number almost infinite, are commonly divided into nine choirs and three hierarchies. In the first are the cherubim, seraphim, and thrones: the cherubim property is to be inflamed with the love of God and to enkindle the same in others. The seraphim excel in wisdom and knowledge of God, and with the same do enlighten the inferior angels. The thrones are so called, for that by reason of their singular purity, humility, and justice, God doth particularly reside in them as His imperial throne. Apply all this to yourself, and endeavour to be a cherubim in love, a seraphim in the knowledge of God and of heavenly things; and a throne in purity of life, in humility, and justice towards God and man.

Consider 2.—In the second hierarchy are the dominations, virtues, and powers; the dominations exercise command over the inferior angels, and direct them in the government of the universe; the virtues do affect in themselves and others a firm and unchangeable adherence to God and all manner of virtue; the powers, as their name sounds, are endowed with power to curb and quell the infernal spirits. Implore the assistance of this powerful hierarchy that you may likewise constantly adhere to God, be perfect master of your own passions and vicious appetites; and by a complete victory over all temptations, subdue your mortal enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Consider 3.—In the third hierarchy are the principalities, archangels, and angels; the principalities do both exhibit in themselves, and cause in others the due veneration and worship towards their Lord and God; the archangels are properly God's messengers and administrators in the highest and most important affairs, and are special patrons in purity. The angels "are all ministering spirits, sent to minister for them, who shall receive the inheritance of salvation."—Heb. i. 14. Be zealous of the Divine worship, both in yourself and others: strive to be eminent in purity, and by a virtuous life and conversation endeavour to be a good angel, and "minister of salvation," to your neighbour.

HOLY PATRIARCHS AND PROPHETS.

Consider 1.—How, even from the beginning, and in times of fidelity and idolatry, wherein almost the whole world was involved, God was perfectly served by the holy patriarchs and prophets. 1. They persevered constant in the faith and worship of God, upheld and maintained the same among the people, and carefully delivered it to their posterity. 2. They kept true poverty of spirit, in plenty of wealth and riches, and made use of what they had, not to vanity and ostentation, but to the service of God and benefit of their neighbour, in works of charity. 3. Notwithstanding the multitude of temporal affairs, they preserved themselves in the holy fear of God, and were despisers of the honours, which, from their place and deserts, were due to them from the people.

Consider 2.—They did chiefly excel in an ardent love of Christ, and longing desires and expectations of His coming: "Many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see," etc.—Luke x. 24,—saith our Saviour Himself. And our Lord revealed unto them many Divine secrets, and made them privy to the mysteries of His Incarnation and Passion. In this faith and hope they lived and died; "All these died according to faith, not having received the promises, but beholding them afar off, and saluting them, and confessing that they are pilgrims and strangers on the earth."—Heb. xi. 13. Be ashamed that your esteem, love, and fortitude for these benefits graciously bestowed upon you, should fall short of their affections and desires of the same only represented to them, and that afar off.

Consider 3.—Their fervour of charity, and love towards God; wherewith they constantly endured the greatest afflictions, and death itself, for His sake: "Others were racked (as the Machabees), not accepting deliverance, that they might find a better resurrection:" others, as Jeremias, "had trial of mockeries and stripes, moreover, also, of bands and prisons," as Micheas. "They were stoned." as Zacharias. "They were cut asunder," as Isaias. "They were tempted by allurements of pleasures," as Joseph. "They were put to death by the sword," as the eighty-five

priests whom wicked Saul murdered.—Heb. xi. 34, etc. Learn of these sobriety and moderation in prosperity, constancy and patience in adversity.

THE APOSTLES.—PART I.

Consider 1.—What the apostles were when Christ chose them: they were poor, ignorant, ignoble, and contemptible in the sight of the world; and yet our Lord made choice of them, rather than of others. Admire and reverence the wonderful providence of God herein, "who (as the apostle saith) hath chosen the foolish things of the world, that He may confound the wise: and the weak things of the world," etc., "that He may confound the strong: and the base things of the world, and the things that are contemptible," etc., "and things that are not, that He might bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His sight," etc.—1 Cor. i. 27.

Consider 2.—Other particular causes of this choice: 1. That all might know that the conversion of the world was the work of God, not of man. 2. That both they and we should understand that they were not called for any deserts of their own, but by mere favour and grace. 3. That being by their condition exempted from the cares of temporal things, they might the better attend to the preaching of the gospel. 4. That so they might be fit preachers of evangelical poverty. 5. That having in themselves experience of human weakness and insufficiency, they might learn to bear with others' infirmities. Be humble and little in your eyes that so you may become a fit instrument of God's glory; and be not discouraged for your mean parts and abilities, knowing that God will supply whatsoever is wanting, if you will but do your endeavour.

Consider 3.—The eminent dignity to which they were raised. 1. To be disciples, familiar companions, friends, and brethren to the Son of God. 2. To be next after Christ, who was the chief corner-stone, so many fundamental stones of His Church, and princes of His kingdom. 3. To be the doctors and pastors of the world, "the ministers of Christ," and of the "New Testament," "and the dispensers of the mysteries of God."—1 Cor. iv. 1. These were prefigured by the twelve fountains of the "desert Elim"—Exod.

xv. 27;—the twelve precious stones in the high priest's rational—Exod. xxxix. 10;—the twelve loaves of proposition in the temple—Levit. xxiv. 5;—the twelve stones of which was built the altar—3 Kings xviii. 31;—the twelve oxen that sustained the brazen sea—2 Paral. iv. 4;—the twelve lions of Solomon's throne—3 Kings x. 20;—and the twelve foundations of the Heavenly Jerusalem, etc.—Apoc. xxi. 14.

THE APOSTLES.—PART II.

Consider 1.—The gifts of grace and power conferred upon the apostles, suitable to the dignity of their call. 1. Of consecrating and offering in sacrifice the Body and Blood of our Lord. 2. Of forgiving sins, and of opening and shutting Heaven's gates to men. 3. Of feeding the flock, and ruling the Church of Christ. 4. Of publishing to the world the new law of grace. 5. Of working miracles, "even greater than those" of Christ Himself—John xiv. 12;—they were endowed with gifts of grace above all the patriarchs, prophets, and saints of the Old and New Testament; so that the Church deservedly applieth those words of the psalmist to them: "Thy friends, O God, are made exceedingly honourable: their principality is exceedingly strengthened."—Ps. cxxxviii. 17.

Consider 2.—How the holy apostles answered their call, and co-operate with their grace: 1. They left all, and followed Christ at the first call, and "continued with Him in His temptations."—Luke xxii. 28. 2. By their apostolical preaching, sanctity of life, working of miracles; by continual labours, persecutions, sufferings, and death itself, they planted the faith of Christ throughout the world, cast down idols, abolished vice and infidelity, and established virtue and religion; so that there is nothing good and holy in the Church, which proceeded not from them; the constancy of martyrs, the justice of confessors, the purity of virgins, the zeal of doctors, the sanctity of priests, the rigour of monks and religious, etc., took their beginning from them.

Consider 3.—Their reward: 1. In this life, in the wonderful fruit which they daily reaped of their labours, and chiefly in the interior joy and jubilee of heart, surpassing all the joys of the world: "Peace I leave with you, My peace

I give unto you: not as the world giveth, do I give unto you;" wherein they enjoyed to the full the hundred-fold which Christ had promised them. 2. In the other life, where they shall sit as judges of the world, and even of the angels themselves; and after a special manner shall eat and drink at Christ's table in His kingdom, where, above the other saints, "they shall be inebriated with the plenty of God's house."—Ps. xxxv. 9.

MARTYRS.

Consider 1.—The holy martyrs are the seed of the Church and champions of Christ; martyrdom is an act, 1. Of the greatest charity: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."—John xv. 13. 2. Of invincible patience and fortitude, contemning all manner of torments, and death itself. 3. Of religion, it being an entire sacrifice of the whole man, and perfect holocaust. 4. Of the most perfect imitation of Christ: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."—Luke ix. 23.

Consider 2.—There are divers sorts of martyrs: 1. Those who have suffered death for the faith of Christ among infidels and heretics; of which sort there have been innumerable in God's Church. 2. For defence of the truth, as St. John Baptist, Isaias, Jeremias. 3. For the observance of the Divine law, as the Machabees. 4. For defence of the Church's liberties and immunities, as St. Thomas of Canterbury. 5. For their own piety and virtue, as Abel the just. Besides these, there are other true martyrs, who, though not in their body, have suffered interiorly in their mind; as 1. The Blessed Virgin, whose soul was pierced with the sword of grief—Luke ii. 35—and deservedly styled the Queen of martyrs. 2. Holy hermits, virgins, and the truly religious, who, all their lifetime, have crucified their flesh with its desires; among whom many, through the long continuance of their sufferings, have not only equalled, but also surpassed in merit the sharp torments of martyrs.

Consider 3.—Their reward: 1. Of heavenly comfort and consolation, which was oftentimes so great that it made them insensible of their torments. 2. Of security of their future happiness; "In your patience you shall possess your

souls."—Luke xxi. 19. Whence St. Augustine: "He that prayeth for a martyr, doth an injury to the martyr." 3. Of a special crown of glory in Heaven above all other saints. 4. Of particular honour which the whole Church doth them in celebrating their feasts, next to those of the apostles, both more frequently and solemnly; so that most true are the words of the psalmist: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."—Ps. cxv. 15. See that you celebrate aright their festivities, that is, by imitation of their virtues; for, as St. Augustine saith, "The solemnities of martyrs are so many exhortations to martyrdom"—Serm. 47. de Sanctis,—at least of self-love, inordinate passions, and evil desires.

THE DOCTORS OF THE CHURCH.

Consider 1.—Almighty God hath provided His Church with holy doctors, whom He hath endowed with all manner of wisdom and knowledge, human and Divine; and this they obtained, not so much by their own close study and labour, as, 1. By continual prayer, wherewith they humbly begged it of God, the Author of all science and wisdom. 2. By purity of life, whereby they became pure mirrors, fit to receive the rays of Divine light. 3. By humility, whereby they submitted to one another, and to the sense and definitions of the Church. If you desire to partake of their knowledge and wisdom, make use of the same means.

Consider 2.—Their study was not merely to know, which is but an idle curiosity; nor to be known, which is vanity; nor to gain, which is base lucre; but, 1. To further their own salvation. 2. For the good of their neighbour. 3. For the propagation of the holy faith, defence of the Church, and glory of God. Examine what your labours tend to—curiosity, vanity, or the glory of God; see that you employ your learning and other talents, not in devising or upholding new invented doctrines, but in zealously maintaining the known, received, and approved tenets of the Church.

Consider 3.—The admirable fruits of their labours: 1. They have illuminated the whole Church with their holy sermons and writings. 2. They have opened the sense of holy scriptures, declared the mysteries of our faith, maintained and propagated truth and religion. 3. They have

expelled ignorance, corrected errors, vanquished infidelity, heresy, and vice, bringing infidels to the faith, heretics to the Church, sinners to repentance. 4. They have exceedingly promoted piety throughout the whole Christian world, by their zealous preaching, by their admirable practices in all manner of virtue, and by the exemplary sanctity of their lives and conversation; so that the holy Church doth deservedly apply to them what our Saviour said to His apostles, "You are the salt of the earth," etc. "You are the light of the world," etc.—Matt. v. 13, 14. See how the properties of each do agree with them; consider their special reward in Heaven above other saints: "They that are learned" in the law of God, "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that instruct many to justice, as stars for all eternity."—Dan. xii. 3.

HOLY BISHOPS AND CONFESSORS.

Consider 1.—Almighty God, out of His paternal providence, hath raised some among men, who should be, 1. As fathers to others, in begetting them spiritually to Christ. 2. As pastors, by governing and feeding them with the pasture of Divine doctrine. 3. As leaders and guides towards their heavenly country. 4. As mediators between God and man, to appease His wrath against them. 5. As legates, to represent their necessities to God, and to declare His will to them. 6. As high priests in the name of the whole Church, to do Divine worship and honour to God, to offer sacrifice, to present our prayers, oblations, and thanksgivings; and by means of these duties to obtain for us the return of heavenly blessings. These were the proper offices and functions of the holy bishops.

Consider 2.—In regard, the calling of bishops is the same with that of the apostles, whose successors they are; God endowed them with special gifts of grace and virtue, answerable to the dignity and end of their calling. Ponder, therefore, 1. Their apostolic spirit and zeal, in all things belonging to the service of God, and good of souls. 2. Wisdom in governing their flock. 3. Fulness of faith, and devotion in themselves, and indefatigable endeavour of propagating the same in others. 4. Profound knowledge in the scriptures. 5. Interior light, purity, and perfection,

joined with eminency of doctrine, to purify, illuminate, and perfect souls committed to their charge.

Consider 3.—How will they correspond with the grace of their calling, both as to themselves and their flock: for, 1. They were holy and irreprehensible in their life and conversation, as persons of another world, and consecrated to God. 2. Notwithstanding their eminent dignity, and the honours done them by men, they were humble of heart, despisers of themselves, and ambitious of nothing but to serve, and do good to all. 3. They were pure of spirit, though in possession of great revenues, which they employed not in superfluities upon themselves, or their relations, but in relief of the poor, necessities of virgins, pupils, and orphans, and in other works and monuments of piety. As to their flock, they were always intent, discharging to the full the above-mentioned offices of fathers, pastors, guides, mediators, legates, and high priests, by sacrifices and sacraments, by incessant prayer, by counsel, exhortation, preaching, etc. "Remember," therefore, with gratitude, "your prelates (saith the apostle), who have spoken the word of God to you: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation"—Heb. xiii. 7,—and other virtues.

THE PATRIARCHS OR FOUNDERS OF RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

Our blessed Lord, to maintain in His Church the fervour which He inspired in the primitive Christians, hath instituted several religious orders, as so many schools of evangelical perfection. For the founding of them, He raised men from nothing, as He formerly did His apostles, and by the power of His Divine grace, made them absolute masters, and perfect mirrors of perfection to their followers, choice vessels of election to His own honour, and glorious champions of His militant Church, against its capital enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil. Ponder, therefore, to their honour, and your own spiritual good, the admirable virtues which they exercised in opposition to these three common adversaries.

Consider 1.—In opposition to the world, they practised and taught: 1. Perfect contempt thereof, and of all its pomps. 2. Holy solitude and retiredness. 3. Strict silence.

4. Evangelical poverty, and that by vow. 5. Contemplation of heavenly things, whereby, though living on earth, "their conversation was in heaven."—Phil. iii. 20. 6. Ardent love of God, by which they lived wholly to Him; so that they might say with St. Paul, "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me."—Gal. ii. 20. And with the same apostle they were truly crucified to the world, and the world to them.—Gal. vi. 14.

Consider 2.—Against the flesh, they exercised, 1. Angelical purity, consecrating themselves to God by the vow of chastity. 2. Religious modesty and command over their senses and passions. 3. Regular discipline and rule. 4. Rigorous fasting. 5. Continual prayer, reading, and other holy exercises. 6. Penance, and perfect mortification of the whole man, interior and exterior; by all which means, as the apostle speaketh, "they have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences."—Gal. v. 24.

Consider 3.—Against the devil they opposed, 1. Profound humility, and contempt of themselves. 2. The vow of perfect obedience, requiring of their followers entire resignation of their wills and judgments into the hands of their superiors. 3. Lively and vigorous faith, working always conformably to it, and according to the principles of eternal verity. 4. Inflamed love of God and their neighbours, seeking in all their actions His greater glory and their everlasting good; labouring both by themselves and their children, to suppress infidelity, heresy and sin, with zealous preaching, teaching, administration of sacraments and other apostolical functions. Extol the goodness of God, honour and reverence these saints, and make your benefit of their example by imitation, according to the state of life and condition you are in.

CONFESSORS IN GENERAL.

Consider 1.—Under the name of confessors are understood, 1. Those who have openly professed the faith of Christ before judges, and after imprisonments, chains, torments, and banishments, suffered for the same causes, and without further violence have died in peace. 2. Those who, having left all they had in the world, have consecrated themselves to God in religion, living in perpetual poverty,

chastity, obedience, and observance of religious discipline. 3. All those who, not being in any of the above-mentioned ranks of saints, have led their lives in all manner of virtue and sanctity, conformable to their state of life and calling. They are called confessors, because they confessed Christ, 1. In their heart, believing in Him, loving and adoring Him. 2. With their tongues, continually praising and blessing Him, and giving Him thanks for His benefits. 3. In their actions, keeping His commandments, following His counsels, and labouring in the exercise of good works. Imitate these holy saints, and endeavour to confess, and honour God with your whole heart, and in all your words and actions.

Consider 2.—These holy confessors, not content with the bare observance of God's commandments and counsels, laboured to purge their heart and affections of all whatsoever was not God, by a pure and upright intention of His honour and service in all things; their care and study was, to regulate their thoughts, to moderate their affections, to curb their senses, to break self-will and judgment, and by taming the flesh with fasting, watching, and other corporal austerities, to bring it to perfect subjection to the spirit, that so they might serve their Creator with a pure and undefiled heart. For the same end they gave themselves to the continual exercise of prayer and meditation of Heavenly things, and led their lives free from worldly cares and thoughts. Endeavour, by the same means, to procure this purity of heart and intention, which these saints made so much of.

Consider 3.—Of what benefit to the Church and merit with God these holy confessors are: 1. For that by the singular purity and integrity of their life, they easily appease God's wrath against sinners, and obtain blessings from Him. 2. For that thereby, more efficaciously than by words, they preach the contempt of the world, and convince, by their own example, that there is no sex, age, condition, or calling in the Church, which may not by the concurrence with God's grace, easily attain to virtue and perfection. Consider, finally, their reward: 1. "Every one therefore that shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before the angels of God, and before My Father who is in Heaven."—Matt. x. 32; Luke xii. 8. 2. Of

these our Lord said: "That He will gird Himself, and make them sit down," at His nuptial feast in Heaven, "and passing will minister unto them."

VIRGINS.

Consider 1.—Holy virgins are those, who, notwithstanding whatever enticements, threats, promises, temptations, etc., lead their lives in all purity of body and mind; and while they are yet in the flesh, emulate the perfection of pure spirits, with this advantage of desert, that what they are by nature, these arrive unto by a glorious victory over their own nature. Virgins are specially beloved by Christ; He would have a Virgin Mother, a virgin for His precursor; and among all His disciples, He loved best the virgin St. John. "Virginity (as St. Cyprian affirmeth) is the flower of the Church's offspring, the glory and ornament of spiritual grace, the image of God, and the most illustrious portion, or part, of Christ's flock."—Cypr. de Discipl. et Habit. Virg.

Consider 2.—Virginity, although it be a special gift of God, is not bestowed without our concurrence, nor preserved without diligent care: "For we have this treasure in earthen vessels."—2 Cor. iv. 7. The means, therefore, to obtain and preserve it are, 1. Mortification of the flesh, by fasting, abstinence, watching, and other corporal austerities. 2. Strict guard upon our senses, which are the gates through which all evil doth enter into our soul. 3. Command over our thoughts, neither admitting, nor even disputing with any that are against this virtue. 4. The avoiding of all occasions that may bring us into the least danger. 5. Earnest prayer to Almighty God, whose gift it is. 6. Humility, not trusting to ourselves, knowing our own weakness. 7. Fear of God. 8. Memory of the last things.

Consider 3.—The reward of virginity: 1. It is sufficient reward to itself, freeing the soul from the tyranny of the flesh, and unruly passions to which others are subject, and filling the same with most pure joy and content, above all the delights of the world. 2. Virgins, after a special manner, are temples of the Holy Ghost, and spouses of Christ, with whom He delighteth to be; whence they have that singular prerogative above others in Heaven, that "they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."—Apoc.

xiv. 4. 3. They have a special crown in Heaven, like that of martyrs. And St. Ambrose doth style virginity, the mother of martyrs, and a glorious martyrdom itself. Stir yourself up to the love of this heavenly and angelical virtue, and make use of the means that help to obtain it.

THE FEAST OF ANY SAINT.—*General Points.*

Consider 1.—Four things on whatsoever saint you meditate: 1. His Predestination. 2. Calling. 3. Justification. 4. Glorification; according to the words of the apostle: "Whom He predestinated, them He also called. And whom He called, them He also justified. And whom He justified, them He also glorified."—Rom. viii. 30. The predestination, or choosing to glory, was of God's free gift, without any desert of theirs, "Before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and unspotted in His sight."—Ephes. i. 4. Their calling, in divers of them, was different: some were called in their youth, others in their old age; some by miracle, others occasionally; but God hath been wonderfully in all. Their justification afforded them great gifts of grace and special helps, the chief of which you may reflect upon more in particular. Their glorification, chiefly after death, by miracles, visions, the gift of curing diseases, and the like.

Consider 2.—How the saint, of whom you meditate, answered God's call, and practised what he required, of all those that follow them, as is set down in the gospel: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny Himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me."—Matt. xvi. 24. Ponder how he was, 1. In the abnegation of himself, by mortifying his flesh, senses, and appetites. 2. In carrying his cross; that is, in manfully undergoing labours and pains for the glory of God, and suffering adversities, such as sickness, persecutions, afflictions, miseries, etc. 3. In following Christ, by the exercise of all manner of virtue, in imitation of Him.

Consider 3.—In what particular, and in what manner you are to imitate the saint, of whom you meditate; because, as Saint Chrysostom saith, "You must imitate, if you praise, or must not praise, if you refuse to imitate; and we might be what the saints are, if we would do what they did."—Chrysost. Ser. de Mart. quod imitand. in Brev. 7 Novemb.

TO THE READER.

As the Meditations for Sundays throughout the year, according to the Author's distribution, are directed chiefly in order to Holy Communion, with little reflection upon the proper matter, or subject, of the current gospel, I thought it would conduce to the general satisfaction of all, to subjoin in this place, some easy method, whereby might be assigned to each Sunday its proper gospel, which might afford matter both of mental prayer, for those who desire to meditate weekly on the gospel of the Sunday, and of discourse for the benefit of those who have not always at hand matter ready for their functions of preaching and exhortation; to which purpose I have here set down a Table, representing, 1. Each Sunday, according to its order in the Church's Calendar. 2. The subject of the gospel. 3. The chapter and verse, by which the gospel may be found in the Holy Bible. 4. The page of this book, which doth direct you to their Meditation: 1. In reference to Holy Communion. 2. To the subject of that Sunday's gospel. And because many Sundays have not, in this Journal, their proper gospel, I have supplied the want with as many Meditations taken, chiefly out of BUSEUS, a known and approved spiritual author.

TABLE OF THE SUNDAYS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

First Sunday in Advent.

The latter Judgment, Luke xxi. 25, page 33, etc., see page 25, also page 26, of particular Judgment.

Second Sunday in Advent.

St. John's Message to Christ, Matt. xi. 2, p. 39, see p. 293, etc.

Third Sunday in Advent.

The Jews' Message to St. John, John i. 19, p. 46, see p. 244, etc.

Fourth Sunday in Advent.

St. John's first Preaching in the Desert, Luke iii. 1, p. 53.

Consider 1.—"In the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar," etc., "the word of the Lord was made unto John, the son

of Zachary, in the desert." How St. John's and our Lord's preaching took their beginning from the desert, that you should love holy solitude and retiredness, as the fittest disposition to receive God's inspirations: "I will lead her (the soul) into the wilderness: and I will speak to her heart."—Osee ii. 14. Think where are now those great ones who are mentioned in this gospel; the Roman emperor and president, the tetrarchs and high priests; they are all gone, and their memory is kept here, not for their own sakes, but to evidence to the world the Incarnation and Passion of our Lord, of which they were remarkable witnesses and actors. Admire not, therefore, nor regard the greatness and prosperity of such in this life, but rather think what all will come to at last: "The name of the wicked shall rot."—Prov. x. 7.

Consider 2.—"He preached the baptism of penance for the remission of sins;" that is, preparing men's hearts to receive the same afterwards by the faith and baptism of Christ. Think how important a thing penance is: 1. For that it was the principal subject of the preaching of St. John, of Christ, and of His apostles—all crying out to their auditors, "Do penance."—Matt. iii. 2. Because we are all sinners, and stand in need of penance. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves."—1 John i. 8. 3. For that, as Christ saith, "Unless you shall do penance, you shall all likewise perish."—Luke xiii. 3. See you also do penance, and "yield fruits worthy of penance;" that is, satisfactory works, amendment of life, etc.

Consider 3.—"Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight His paths. Every valley shall be filled; and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways plain." Our preparation, therefore, against the coming of Christ must be: 1. By filling up the empty valleys of slothfulness and pusillanimity. 2. By rectifying our crooked intentions. 3. By correcting the roughness of anger, hatred, envy, and other passions, so as to become of an even temper, and agreeable conversation with all. Think, lastly, what a happiness is promised us in those words, "And all flesh shall see the Salvation of God," that is, "Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and justice, and sanctification, and redemption."—1 Cor. i. 30.

Sunday within the Octave of the Nativity.

What passed with Simeon, Anna, etc., Luke ii. 25, see p. 82.

Sunday within the Octave of the Epiphany.

Our Lord's Going up to the Temple, etc., Luke ii. 42, p. 95, etc., see p. 102.

Second Sunday after Epiphany.

The Marriage in Galilee, John ii. 1, p. 79, see p. 267.

Third Sunday after Epiphany.

The Leper and the Centurion's Servant, Matt. viii. 1, p. 86, see p. 331, etc., and again 320.

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.

Allaying the Tempest at sea, Matt. viii. 23, p. 94, see p. 200.

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany.

The good seed and the cockle, Matt. xiii. 24, p. 101, see p. 371.

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany.

The mustard seed, Matt. xiii. 31, p. 107, see p. 372.

Septuagesima Sunday.

The workmen sent into the vineyard, Matt. xx. 1, p. 110, see p. 357, etc.

Sexagesima Sunday.

The Sower, Luke viii. 4, p. 117, see p. 370.

Quinquagesima Sunday.

Christ's foretelling His Passion, and healing the blind man, Luke xviii. 35, p. 124, see p. 338.

First Sunday of Lent.

Christ's temptations in the desert, Matt. iv. 1, p. 131; see from p. 248 to 253.

Second Sunday of Lent.

Our Lord's Transfiguration, Matt. xvii. 1, p. 138, see p. 396.

Third Sunday of Lent.

Of the dumb devil, Luke xi. 14, p. 145.

Consider 1.—Christ having cast out a dumb devil, certain of them said, "Through Beelzebub the prince of devils He casteth out devils." Observe here the goodness of God on the one side, in doing good to men, and turning out devils; and the perverseness of men on the other, in calumniating the good, and ascribing it to the devil. Ponder Christ's answer, "Every kingdom divided against itself, shall be brought to desolation." Think how your heart is divided: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit; and the Spirit against the flesh"—Gal. v. 17,—and see you bring this in perfect subjection to the Spirit. Beg of Christ that in the Spirit of God He would cast out devils, that is, all sin, out of your heart, that "the kingdom of God may come upon you."

Consider 2.—What Christ saith, that "when the unclean spirit is gone out of a man," etc., "he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering in, they dwell there. And the last state of that man becomes worse than the first." Doth not the same happen to most men after baptism by the seven deadly sins, which they give way unto? Doth it not also happen sometimes after conversion from the world, that some return back far worse than ever they were before? See, therefore, you keep the gates of your senses well shut against the devil and all sin; but be sure, whatever you do, you do not let either dwell in your heart.

Consider 3.—The special blessing attributed to the Sacred Virgin in this gospel; the one temporal, and relating to flesh and blood, of which "a certain woman from the crowd lifting up her voice said to Him: Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps that gave Thee suck:" the other purely spiritual, of which Christ pronounced, chiefly in relation to His Blessed Mother, "Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the Word of God, and keep it." The first was a singular privilege of the Virgin alone; the

other, though hers also after a more special manner, is common to many, and may be yours if you will yourself: admire and extol that, with the woman, and with the Church, that useth the same words to the Virgin, and make this other your own by imitation.

Fourth Sunday of Lent.

Five thousand fed in the desert, John vi., p. 152, see p. 296.

Passion Sunday.

Christ's arguing with the Jews, John viii. 46, p. 159.

Consider 1.—Christ, by reason of the beatifical vision and hypostatical union, was most holy and irreprehensible in Himself, and irrefragable in His doctrine; and by these two titles of sanctity and veracity, deservedly claims belief of His doctrine and authority of rebuking sinners, saying, "Which of you shall convince Me of sin? If I say the truth to you, why do you not believe Me?" O that you could make the like challenge! Think whether you do practically believe Christ's doctrine, as to matters of virtue and perfection; and whether you do willingly hear the Word of God and His holy inspirations, delivered unto you in sermons, exhortations, pious books, etc., and know, that as "he that is of God, heareth the words of God;" so he that "hears not, is not of God."

Consider 2.—The Jews having said, "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil;" Christ silently beareth the first, as a private injury relating only to His person, as He was man; but modestly denieth the other, wherein was highly concerned His Father's and His own Divine honour, saying, "I have not a devil; but I honour My Father." Well, therefore, might He say, "I seek not My own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth." Think how contrary you are in this point to Christ; seek in all your actions the greater glory of God, and God will honour you; "Whosoever shall glorify Me, him will I glorify."—1 Kings ii. 30. Seek not revenge in affronts and injuries, but commit your cause to God, who saith, "Vengeance belongeth to Me, I will repay."

Consider 3.—"Amen, amen, I say to you, if any man

keep My word, he shall not see death for ever." What greater happiness and security can there be than this? And yet how few are there that are concerned for it? How many that regard the maxims and sayings of the world, more than they do the Divine words, counsels, and promises of Christ? But see that you adhere to Christ and say with St. Peter, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."—John vi. 69. Remember, and ponder well what Christ Himself said: "Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God."

Palm Sunday.

Of Christ's entrance into Jerusalem, Matt. xxi. 1, p. 166, see p. 119.

Easter Sunday.

Of the appearance made to the Women, Mark xvi. 1, p. 174, see p. 177.

Low Sunday.

Christ's appearance to His Disciples, St. Thomas being present, John xx. 19, p. 181, see p. 183, etc.

Second Sunday after Easter.

Of the good Pastor, John x. 11, p. 188.

Consider 1.—"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep;" all that have care of others are pastors; superiors of their subjects, parents of their children, housekeepers of their family, etc., and every one of his own powers, senses, members, etc. We are good pastors, when we rule, govern, and maintain those that are under us, with counsel, example, food, corporal and spiritual; we are good sheep, when we are innocent, tractable, obedient, patient, etc. We lay down our lives, when in opposition to the wolves, the world, the flesh, and the devil; we deny our own wills and judgments, refrain our senses, and choose rather to die than to offend God mortally in any of them.

Consider 2.—"But the hireling, etc., seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep, and flieth;" we are hirelings,

1. When in our good actions, as prayers, sermons, etc., we seek not God's honour, but vainglory and esteem of the world. 2. When at the wolf's appearance, by some temptation of the flesh or the world, we make no resistance, nor chastise our body with mortification, but fly all penance, and by too much indulgence give our sheep over to be devoured by their enemies; whereby we come both to lose our sheep, and title of shepherds and masters, and to fall into the miserable condition of slaves; for "whosoever committeth sin, is the servant or slave of sin."—John viii. 34.

Consider 3.—"I know mine, and mine know me." It is the property of good sheep and shepherd to know one another. Make it, therefore, your business, 1. As good sheep, to know your pastor from your enemy; to understand the voice of God by His Church and your superiors; to hearken to His inspirations, to obey His counsels and commands, to acknowledge and love His goodness and mercy towards you. 2. As a good pastor, rightly to understand yourself; to know your own weakness, infirmities, and imperfections; to have an eye upon your interior powers; to oversee and rule your exterior senses; say with St. Augustine, "Lord, that I may know Thee and know myself."

Third Sunday after Easter.

Christ comforteth His Disciples, John xvi. 16, page 194.

Consider 1.—"A little while, and now you shall not see Me," being taken from you by My Passion and death: "and again a little while, and you shall see Me," in My resurrection, though but for a little while, "because I go to the Father." Christ here mingleth sorrow with joys; but first sorrow, then joys; the world, on the contrary, first proposeth joys, pleasures, and content, but at last bringeth all to sorrow and misery. "Amen, amen, I say to you, that you shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice." Observe the different lot of Christ's and the world's disciples in this life, and choose which you will have to be yours; but know that "your sorrow shall be turned into joy."

Consider 2.—Christ compareth the apostles' joy for His resurrection, after their sorrow for His passion (the same

is of the happiness of the next life, after the labours of this), to the joy of a woman after the travail of childbirth; because both these griefs are bitter, both short, both full of danger, and afterwards both turned into joy suitable to their sorrows; and as there, so here the cause of pain is also cause of comfort: "A woman, when she is in labour, hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world." Reflect upon each particular.

Consider 3.—What followeth: "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you." Thus "our tribulation, which at present is momentary and light, worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."—2 Cor. iv. 17. On the contrary, the worldlings, for the short and momentary delight which they enjoyed in this life, are punished with everlasting torments in the next; Job said of them, "They spend their days in wealth," and jollity, "and in a moment they go down to hell."—Job xxi. 13. Imprint on your memory those words of Abraham to the rich glutton: "Remember that thou didst receive good things in thy lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."—Luke xvi. 25.

Fourth Sunday after Easter.

Christ treateth of His going, and sendeth the Holy Ghost; John xvi. 7, p. 201.

Consider 1.—"I go to Him that sent Me," etc.; "it is expedient to you that I go;" it was also expedient for Him so to take possession of His glory; but, unmindful of His own, He is concerned for our good. Oh! that you were so for His honour! "If I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you." The love which the apostles bore to Christ was mixed with some human affection; wherefore, to refine this, and make it purely spiritual, it was necessary He should subtract Himself from them. If the affection to Christ's Sacred Humanity was a hindrance to the receiving of the Divine Spirit, how much more the affection to other flesh and blood, though in spiritual and holy persons?

Consider 2.—"And when He is come, He will convince the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment." "The Holy Ghost doth convince the world of sin (saith St. Bernard), because it dissembles; of justice, which it doth not rightly order, while it attributes the same to man, not to God; of judgment, which it usurps, while it judgeth rashly, not only of itself, but others too."—Bern. Ser. xii. Think what the Divine Spirit may argue you of; bring your actions to light, and be not of the number of those that "do evil, hate the light, and come not to the light, that their works may not be reproved"—John iii. 20;—know that "if we did judge ourselves, we should not be judged."

Consider 3.—"When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will teach you all truth." This is a promise made to the Church; He shall not speak of Himself, that is not only of Himself, but also from the Father and the Son from whom He proceedeth, and from whom He is sent; "but what things soever He shall hear," from them, "He shall speak." Think how well-grounded the faith is which you have from the Church, the Church from the Divine Spirit, the Spirit from Christ, Christ from the Eternal Father; He shall glorify Me, "because He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it to you;" confirming to them the Doctrine of Christ, perfecting their understanding, opening the sense of Scriptures, etc. Rejoice and be thankful for so great benefits bestowed upon the Church for your good.

Fifth Sunday after Easter.

Christ recommendeth Prayer to His Disciples; John xvi. 23, page 208.

Ascension Day.

Of the Mystery; Mark xvi., page 212.

Sunday in the Octave.

Of the Holy Ghost, and of the Apostles' persecutions; John xv. 26, 27, and xvi. 1, etc., page 215.

Consider 1.—"When the Paraclete cometh, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth, who pro-

ceedeth from the Father, He shall give testimony of Me." Christ, to raise in His disciples a desire and love of the Divine Spirit, doth speak much of Him, at His departure, and here He acquaints them with two chief properties: 1. That He is a Paraclete, that is, a Comforter; for He it is that "comforteth us in all our tribulation"—2 Cor. i. 4;—and the Church calleth Him, "the best Comforter, and the sweet Guest of our soul"—Seq. in Missa de Spir. S.,—being indeed a "sweet refreshment," tempering the heats of our concupiscence and passions; "rest and ease" to us "in our labours, solace and comfort in our tears" and afflictions. Invite this Divine Comforter to your heart, and refuse all other comfort and satisfaction from creatures.

Consider 2.—The other property of being "the Spirit of Truth." 1. For that He proceeds from the Son, who is the wisdom of His Father, "the way, and the truth, and the life."—John xiv. 6. 2. Because He is sent to manifest the truth of Christ's Doctrine, of His being the true Messias, Son of God, and Saviour of the world. 3. For that He giveth testimony of the New Testament, which is of truth itself, whereof the Old Testament was but a shadow. 4. For that He is the Author of all truth; "and you shall give testimony." Ponder here the infinite dignity of the apostles, and of their successors, the priests of God's Church, in that they are joined in testimony of Christ's deity, and of all the other mysteries of faith, even with the Holy Ghost Himself; admire, reverence, and defend this Divine authority of the Church.

Consider 3.—Christ forewarns His disciples of their persecutions. 1 "That they be not scandalized," troubled, or disheartened when they happen. 2. That they should know what they were to trust to, and what they were called for, and that they might not think them to fall out by chance, etc. 3. That they might prepare and arm themselves against them with patience and fortitude. 4. "That when the hour shall come, they might" have the comfort to remember that He told them: "they will put you out of the synagogues; and whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth a service to God." Think whether you would be content to be an outcast, contemned and despised by men, and even to suffer death for Christ.

Whitsunday.

Of the Mystery, Gospel, John xiv. 23, page 221, etc.

Trinity Sunday.

Christ commissioneth His disciples to baptize in the name of the Blessed Trinity; Matt. xxviii. 18, page 227, which are on the Mystery.

Consider 1.—"All power is given to Me in Heaven and in earth;" Christ had this power, 1. As God from all eternity. 2. As man, in the very instant of His Incarnation, by right of the hypostatical union. 3. Through the merit of His Passion and Death, as to the perfect use and exercise of it. Hence it followeth, that we have a triple obligation of serving Him: 1. As our God, by His Deity 2. As the Sovereign Lord, and Head of all mankind, by His Incarnation. 3. As our Saviour and Redeemer, by His Death and Passion. As He hath exercised His power to the full for your good, see that you fulfil your duty in serving Him.

Consider 2.—"Going, therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." By virtue of this Divine power He doth authorise and commission His disciples, 1. To go and teach what He had taught them. 2. To baptize them in the name of the Blessed Trinity, that by the benefit of baptism they might obtain Divine faith, remission of sins, grace, and everlasting glory. 3. To deliver unto them Christ's new law, precepts, and counsels, "teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you."

Consider 3.—"And behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world;" Christ is with us, 1. As God, by His immensity. 2. As God and man, by His presence in the Holy Eucharist. 3. By habitual and actual grace, enabling us to act supernaturally, in order to our end. 4. By a special providence, governing and directing every one towards the attaining to the perfection of their vocation. 5. After a special manner, He is with the whole Church and principal members thereof, assisting them with His Divine wisdom and veracity in their councils and definitions, interpretation of Scriptures, and government; and arming them with His omnipotent power against persecu-

tions, heresy, and infidelity; so that the gates of hell shall not be able to prevail against them. Be grateful for these benefits, and endeavour to be always present with Him in mind and affection.

On the same day, as being the first Sunday after Pentecost.

The Gospel is chiefly of Mercy; Luke vi. 36, for which see page 281.

Corpus Christi Day.

Of the Mystery; John vi. 55, page 230, etc.

Sunday in the Octave of Corpus Christi.

The Great Supper; Luke xiv. 16, page 234, etc., see page 359.

Third Sunday after Pentecost.

The Lost Sheep; Luke xv. 1, page 241, see p. 373.

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost.

Christ teacheth out of Peter's ship; Luke v. 1, see page 247.

Consider 1.—The multitudes pressing, our Lord went up into Peter's ship; and that being brought back a little from the land, "sitting, He taught the multitudes out of the ship." Ponder with what fervour the people hurried to hear the Word of God. Be ashamed of your own dulness herein, and eagerness of hearing the trifling news and reports of the world. Christ teacheth from Peter's ship, from which we are all to take the Word of God, our faith, and the hopes of our salvation, out of which there is none. Observe how the ship was brought from the land, to teach us that the preacher's life and doctrine must not be worldly, but celestial.

Consider 2.—"When He had ceased to speak, He said to Simon: Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." It is Christ that moves our heart in sermons, but it is our part to co-operate—to launch forth into the deep, by proceeding always forward, and raising our intentions and desires to Heavenly things, and to "let down our nets" by a forwardness and endeavour of profiting

upon all occasions. Peter answered: "We have laboured all night, and have taken nothing." Such are the fruits of worldly cares and labours; and in the night of sin, nothing is gained in order to eternal life; we must, therefore, loose our nets in Christ's name, and upon His word, by a sincere intention of serving and obeying Him.

Consider 3.—"And when they had done this, they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes, and their net broke;" whereupon Peter fell down at Jesus's knees, saying: "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." Ponder here, 1. Peter lendeth Christ his empty boat, and receives it full of fish, and is well enough contented to have his net broken in so profitable a service; so ought we, in temporal losses, that are accompanied with great spiritual gains. 2. Peter, out of humility, falleth upon his knees, and is made the fisher of men: "From henceforth thou shalt catch men." 3. Upon the same account He willeth Christ to go from him, and thereby came the nearer unto Him: for, "leaving all things, they followed Him." Ponder each particular, and gather something for your own profit.

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost.

Of the observance of the law, Matt. v. 20, page 254.

Consider 1.—"Unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven." The Pharisees did often fast, they prayed much in the temple and in the streets, they gave the tithes of what they had, they gave God thanks for His benefits, they carried the law about them in the hem of their garment, etc. Do you do as much? Yet, all this was nothing but an outward show of virtue, and only ceremonious observances of their own; the justice of a Christian must be internal and real, consisting in a pure intention of God's honour in all things, in the exercise of Christian virtue, chiefly of charity, patience, humility, etc., in subduing our passions, evil inclinations, and affections, and the like.

Consider 2.—"It was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill," etc. "But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment," etc. Ponder the excellency of the new law above the old: 1. That

which was given to a dull and earthly people, prohibited only gross things; this forbiddeth even little imperfections. 2. That went no further than the outward appearance; this passeth to the interior affections of the mind. 3. That proposed no other than temporal reward; this everlasting. Think what perfection God requireth of you, according to your calling, and be sure you come not behind the Pharisees, upon peril of your salvation.

Consider 3.—And imprint in your heart and memory those words of Christ: "If thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother." Fraternal charity is so necessary, that no sacrifice nor Divine worship can be acceptable to God without it; and if this in the old law, how much more in the new? and in the Sacrifice of the Mass, and Communion of the Holy Eucharist? which is the Sacrament of union; for, "We are one body, all that partake of one bread."—1 Cor. x. 17. Obesrve how God vouchsafeth to accept of our poor duties, as offerings and gifts, whereas they are, indeed, His own gifts, and bringing no good to Him from us.

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost.

Of the seven loaves, Mark viii. 1, page 230.

Consider 1.—"Jesus calling His disciples together, He saith to them: I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat. And if I shall send them away fasting to their home, they will faint in the way." This is a perfect emblem of our condition in this world, where, even at the best, we are objects of compassion; the world is a desert, a habitation of wild beasts, and void of all good, having nothing whereon our immortal soul can feed and satiate itself; we are afar off from our Heavenly country, and ready to faint, and fail in our way home; happy only in this, if we keep company with Jesus, and can be content to "endure with Him."

Consider 2.—Christ's infinite goodness: 1. In having compassion of their condition. 2. In consulting with His disciples for redress. 3. In making "the people sit down

on the ground." 4. In distributing amongst them that little provision which He had for Himself and His disciples; all which He did, giving thanks, breaking the loaves, blessing the fish, and giving them to His disciples. Apply this also spiritually, and acknowledge in the fish and seven loaves the provision of grace afforded us in the seven sacraments, as also the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, whereby the soul "is filled" with comfort, strength, and vigour, to continue the course of our pilgrimage.

Consider 3.—"And they took up that which was left of the fragments, seven baskets." Thus, God is always overflowing in His liberality and gifts towards us, but how niggard and close-handed are we towards Him and our neighbour? Observe here, that the overplus that we have, either in temporals or spirituals, ought not to be cast away, but gathered together for the supply of others that are indigent. Lastly, learn this great lesson, that none will ever be the poorer, but rather the richer, for what they bestow out of pure charity upon others, for relief of their corporal or spiritual necessities. See more of the same subject, concerning the five loaves, page 296.

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost.

False Prophets; Matt. vii. 15, page 266.

Consider 1.—"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." False prophets, 1. Are heretics, who, under the fair pretence of sanctity, liberty of conscience, expounding of Scripture, etc., preach false doctrine. 2. All those, who, under the pretext of some good, or virtue, especially of prudence and discretion, preach to us such things as are more agreeable to flesh and blood; such as are self-love, concupiscence, passion, worldly maxims, pleasant companions, the devil, etc. Have a care what prophets you entertain; see they be none of those of whom Jeremias said, "Thy prophets have seen false and foolish things for thee."—Lam. ii. 14.

Consider 2.—"By their fruits you shall know them." Think what are the fruits of the above-mentioned false prophets; obstinacy, licentiousness, disorder, disquiet, sting and wound of conscience, etc. "A good tree cannot bring

forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit."—Matt. vii. 18. The tree planted in the earth raiseth its branches and fruit upwards; so man, though upon earth, should have his "conversation in Heaven," and produce Heavenly fruit: "Every tree that doth not yield good fruit shall be cut down, and cast into the fire."—Matt. iii. 10. Take warning and yield good fruit in time; perhaps the axe is now put at the root of your tree.

Consider 3.—"Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father who is in Heaven." Not all that call upon God by an exterior profession of godliness, nor all that undertake to preach His Word, shall be saved, but those only who bring forth the good required, viz., the will of God, declared unto them by the holy Church, superiors, directors, interior inspirations, etc. "This is the will of God (saith the apostle), your sanctification"—1 Thess. iv. 3,—by supernatural grace and exercise of solid virtue, according to every one's state and profession.

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost.

The unjust Steward, Luke xvi. 1, p. 273.

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost.

Christ's weeping over the City, Luke xix. 41, p. 280; see p. 120.

Tenth Sunday after Pentecost.

The Publican and the Pharisee, Luke xxiii. 9, p. 286; see p. 377.

Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost.

The deaf and dumb man, Mark vii. 31, p. 292; see p. 335.

Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost.

The good Samaritan, Luke x. 25, p. 298.

Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

The ten lepers, Luke xvii. 11, p. 305; see p. 333.

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

Serving God and Mammon, Matt. vi. 24, p. 311.

Consider 1.—"No man can serve two masters," etc. "You cannot serve God and Mammon." There are two that would have you for their servant, God, and the world; you cannot serve both, because they are opposite to one another; neither can you serve one, without hating the other. God requires of you that you should seek Heaven, contemn earthly things, embrace virtue, curb the flesh, subdue sense, etc. The world, on the contrary, will have you seek your own content and satisfaction, enjoy the convenience of this life, neglect spiritual things, cherish and pamper the flesh, and give full scope to all your sensual appetites. Now choose which of these two services you like best, whom you will have for your master, whom you will love, and whom you hate.

Consider 2.—"Therefore I say unto you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on, etc."—Christ persuades us here to cast off all immoderate care of temporals, which He doth by five convincing arguments:—1. If God hath given us our soul and body, He will also provide us with necessaries for their preservation. 2. If God doth so providently feed the beasts of the earth, and adorn the flowers and grass of the field, what will He not do for His children? 3. For that all our care availeth nothing without God's providence, not being able to add a cubit to your stature. 4. For that this care is common to heathens and infidels that know not God, not proper for Christians that believe and trust in Him. 5. For that God is a loving Father, who cannot know the necessities of His children, and let them want.

Consider 3.—That most admirable and comfortable conclusion. "Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you." The kingdom of God is His glory, and our everlasting happiness. "But one thing is necessary," that is the "treasure hidden in a field."—Luke x. 12; Matt. xiii. 44, 45,—this is the precious pearl to be purchased with all we have; this ought to be our prime care, to employ our chiefest thoughts, to take up our best time, etc., which done, "all these things shall be added unto us." O that we had courage and reso-

lution to perform the first part, and faith enough practically to believe this latter.

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

The widow's son of Naim, Luke vii. 11, p. 317 ; see p. 346.

Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

The man cured of the dropsy, Luke xiv. 1, p. 324.

Consider 1.—"And it came to pass when Jesus went into the house of one of the chief of the Pharisees on the Sabbath-day to eat bread, that they watched Him." Ponder here the goodness of Christ, not refusing to eat and converse familiarly with His enemies, seeking occasion thereby to do them good ; and the perverseness of the Pharisees in observing and watching Him, not to profit, but to calumniate. Do you observe our Lord in all His sayings and doings, but so as to benefit yourself and to glorify Him, and endeavour to demean yourself so in all your exterior comportment, that you need not fear to be observed and taken notice of by all, even your enemies.

Consider 2.—"And behold, there was a certain man before Him that had the dropsy." Behold yourself in this man, and acknowledge, with St. Augustine, that, "you have a conscience sick of the dropsy"—St. Aug. 2. quæst. Evang.,—thirsting after earthly things : the more you are indulgent to yourself, the more you nourish this disease. Christ feels their pulse and temper before He cures this man, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day?" but they were ashamed to discover their malignity openly ; and, whatever they thought, "they held their peace. But He taking him, healed him, and sent him away." And to justify Himself, appeals to their own conscience, what they would judge lawful in a less concern, of their own ox or ass.

Consider 3.—"When thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the first place," etc., but "go sit down in the lowest place," etc. This, as all other things that He taught, Christ exercised Himself ; He descended from the highest Heaven to the womb of a poor and humble virgin, and all His life long chose for Himself, on all occasions, that which was meanest, and became for us the very "outcast of the

people."—Ps. xxi. 7. Ponder well that golden sentence, "Every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted." "First and last are otherwise taken by God, otherwise by the world; the lower one is in the world's reckoning, the higher he is in God's account, and on the contrary. Christ was in the last rank with the world, but in the first with God. If, therefore, you desire to be near Christ in glory, you must come close to Him in humility."

Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost.

The great precept of charity, Matt. xxii. 34, p. 330.

Consider 1.—"A doctor of the law asked Him, Which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said unto him, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind." We love Him with our whole heart, soul, and mind, when we direct our thoughts, affections, senses, and actions to Him, and when we let no created thing have any place in our heart, but in order to Him, and detest whatsoever is displeasing to Him. Consider the motives you have in this love. 1. His benefits towards you in your creation, preservation, redemption, sanctification, gifts of grace, and promise of glory. 2. His own infinite amiableness, His bounty, riches, power, glory, beauty, etc.

Consider 2.—This love must not content itself with bare affections, wishes and desires; it must pass to actions, and both do and suffer when occasion is, for the service and honour of God, that we may be able to say with the apostle, "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation? or distress, etc., or danger? or persecution? or the sword?"—Rom. viii. 35. It is the property of true love to be communicative of itself, and what it hath with its beloved. Give, therefore, freely to God yourself, and whatsoever you have, and because you have nothing that you have not from Him, return it entire to Him again by gratitude, and faithful use in His service. "This is the greatest and the first commandment."

Consider 3.—"The second is like to this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," For neighbour is not one, but

every child of Adam, friend and enemy, etc. The rule of our love is no other than ourselves; whatsoever, therefore, you would have done, or not done to yourself, observe the same towards others, out of love, and for God, and you have observed this precept. Our motives are, for that we are all created to the same image of God, redeemed with the same Precious Blood of Christ, children of the same Heavenly Father, called to the inheritance of the same kingdom, etc. Make it your whole study to have perfect charity towards God and your neighbour, knowing that "on these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets."

Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

The bedridden let down from the roof, Matt. ix. 1, p. 337.

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost.

The invitation to the wedding, Matt. xxii. 1, p. 343; see p. 359.

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost.

The prince's son restored to health, John iv. 46, p. 350; see p. 323.

Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost.

The debtor of ten thousand talents, Matt. xviii. 24, p. 356.

Consider 1.—There was one presented unto his Lord that owed Him ten thousand talents. This is yourself and every sinner. There is no debt so great as that of sin; think how great yours is. "And as he had not wherewith to pay it, his Lord commanded that he should be sold." We have nothing of our own to make satisfaction of, and by sin we forfeit grace, Heaven, God, soul and body, and enslave ourselves to the devil. "But that servant falling down, besought Him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay Thee all." Think how often God hath had patience with you. You may truly say with the prophet, "The mercies of the Lord that I am not consumed."—Lam. iii. 22.

Consider 2.—"And the Lord of that servant being moved with pity, let him go and forgave him the debt." How easily is God satisfied; how great is His bounty, who giveth more than is asked or could be hoped for. He hath done the

same and much more for you; and hath not only freed you from the slavery of sin, but also made you His adopted son and heir of His kingdom. "When that servant was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him an hundred pence: and laying hold of him, he throttled him, saying: Pay what thou owest;" and notwithstanding the other's humble entreaty, "went and cast him into prison, till he paid the debt." How often do you the same, in the petty injuries done to you.

Consider 3.—"Thou wicked servant, I forgive thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest Me; shouldst not thou then have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee?" Apply these words to yourself and take heed of what follows: "And his Lord being angry, delivered him to the torturers until he paid all the debt." Ponder well the final clause: "So also shall My Heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts." Sins, once forgiven, return not, but the succeeding ingratitude is made the greater, and worthy of double punishment, by the greatness of the former benefit. This forgiveness must not be verbal only, but from the heart, and without keeping any grudge.

Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost.

Paying tribute to Cæsar, Matt. xxii. 16, p. 363.

Consider 1.—"Master, we know that Thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest Thou for any man: for Thou dost not regard the person of men." Here is delivered a perfect description of an upright man. Think how you are in every particular; whether you be a true speaker, 1. As to yourself by a right judgment and estimate of things. 2. In relation to others, by conformance of your words to truth and conscience; whether you hold the way of God, or not rather the maxims or principles of the world; whether you care for man, so as to fear or love him more than you do God; and whether you respect the person of men, so as to do or omit anything for human respect against your conscience.

Consider 2.—"Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar?" A pertinent question, but proposed with a wicked intention,

to entrap Him in His speeches. But there is no counsel, no wisdom against our Lord, who takes them in their own traps, proposing to them a question about the tribute coin, saying, "Whose image and superscription is this?" Look upon yourself and ask this question: "Whose image is this?" You cannot say it is Cæsar's, or the world's—it is God's: "The light of Thy countenance, O Lord, is signed upon us."—Ps. iv. 7. But, alas! how deformed is it become: you have made it the image of the terrene man. Endeavour to reform yourself, "until Christ be formed in you"—Gal. iv. 19;—and "as we have borne the image of the earthly, let us bear also the image of the Heavenly."—1 Cor. xv. 49.

Consider 3.—"Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's: and to God the things that are God's." God will have us give every one his due: "Tribute to whom tribute; custom to whom custom; honour to whom honour; fear to whom fear; owe no man anything, but to love one another." Render yourself, therefore, body and soul, with all your power, senses, and faculties, to God, whose you are by creation, redemption, etc. Render, likewise, what you owe to your neighbour, to wit, love and charity; who is made to the same image, created by the same hand, and redeemed with the same Precious Blood, with yourself.

Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost.

The Ruler's Daughter and the Hemorrhage, Matt. ix. 18, p. 369 ; see p. 344.

Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost, or the last before Advent.

The destruction of Jerusalem and the latter Judgment, Matt. xxiv. 15, p. 376.

Consider 1.—"When therefore you shall see the abomination of desolation, etc., then they that are in Judea, let them flee to the mountains," etc. In the first part of this gospel Christ treateth of Jerusalem's destruction and desolation; in the second of the latter judgment. Death is the time of man's greatest desolation, and the next passage to his particular judgment, on which depends the general.

Christ, therefore, warns us to provide for it in time, for when it is once come, it will then be too late, and we shall be so surprised, that we shall not have leisure to dispose of ourselves or our goods as we would. "He that is on the house-top, let him not come down to take anything out of his house: and he that is in the field, let him not go back to take his coat.

Consider 2.—"Woe to them that are with child, and that give suck in those days." That last day is always at hand, perhaps this may be it. Woe be to you if you labour till now in bare desires, and have as yet brought forth no good works to light. Pray that "your flight be not in the winter." Stir yourself up to fervour, and have a care death comes not upon you while you are cold and frozen in God's service. "Nor on the Sabbath," while you are in your jollities. You must be prepared for every hour, for no hour is secure from danger.

Consider 3.—"There shall be then great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world." Such will death truly be to lukewarm and improvident Christians, that have put off till then what they should have done before; the body will then be tormented all over with a dreadful agony, but much more the conscience, for then it will have a clearer knowledge of good and evil, and will find the burden of sin more heavy and insupportable than ever before. If you be wise, seek to avoid this tribulation; do now what you would have done then; avoid now what you would wish then to have avoided.

TO THE GREATER GLORY OF GOD,

HIS BLESSED VIRGIN MOTHER,

AND ALL HIS SAINTS.

THE END.

Printed by EDMUND BURKE & Co., 61 & 62 Gt. Strand St., Dublin.

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AUTHOR

Journal of Meditations

TITLE

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